

Hafa Adai!

'DOF has minimal knowledge of Munis.' **PAGE 2**

MPLT wants AMP Trust Fund included in planned 902 talks. **PAGE 3**

\$1

Saipan Tribune

Gonzales officially announces his candidacy for delegate

» Republican Party to decide at primary who between Gonzales, King-Hinds will be delegate candidate

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE

John Oliver Delos Reyes Gonzales gestures as he officially announces his candidacy for delegate to the U.S. Congress at this November elections at the KKMP radio station yesterday. Also in the photo clockwise are Gonzales' son, Kiyokazu Ma'gas Suzuki Gonzales, Gary Sword, Marciano Gordon, and Gloria Rasiang.

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE

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REPORTER

John Oliver Delos Reyes Gonzales formally announced yesterday that he will be running as a candidate for delegate to the U.S. Congress this November. He has applied to be on the slate of the NMI

See **GONZALES** on Page 4

Palau's Whipps says renewed Compact is a 'win-win'

By CHRYSTAL MARINO

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CORRESPONDENT

With the approval of a funding package providing \$7 billion to the signatory countries in the Compacts of Free Association, the Republic of Palau will be receiving a sum of \$889 million

See **WHIPPS** on Page 4



CHRYSTAL MARINO

Republic of Palau President Surangel Whipps Jr. makes his remarks during the Palauan Community Association-CNMI's officers induction ceremony last Saturday at the Garapan Central Park.

Trump wins NMI Republican Primary



By FERDIE DE LA TORRE

Former governor Ralph DLG Torres votes for former U.S. president Donald Trump during the NMI Republican Party's presidential primary and national convention delegate caucus at the Garapan Central Park last Friday night. Trump easily won over former South Carolina governor Nikki Haley with a huge margin, 319-25, for the entire CNMI.

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE

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REPORTER

Former U.S. President Donald Trump won over former South Carolina governor Nikki Haley by a huge margin, 319-25, for the entire CNMI

during the NMI Republican Party's presidential primary at the Garapan Central Park Friday night.

NMI Republican Party chair Diego Benavente announced that, according to their unofficial count, 140 on Saipan

See **TRUMP** on Page 4

CNMI leaders working collaboratively, proactively to address fiscal challenges

With a sense of shared responsibility and a commitment to transparency, Gov. Arnold I. Palacios and Lt. Gov. David Apatang yesterday released a joint statement with the presiding officers of

See **LEADERS** on Page 4



Palacios



Apatang



DeLeon Guerrero



Villagomez

INSIDE



BUSINESS

There's a new huggable, feathery friend at the Pacific Islands Club after the resort welcomed its newest mascot, Sandy, who hatched in time for spring!

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NATION

President Joe Biden expressed support Friday for Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer after the senator called for new elections in Israel.

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WORLD

The United States and allies warned Iran on Friday that major Western economies will pile new sanctions on Tehran if it moves forward with an advancing plan to provide ballistic missiles to Russia for its war with Ukraine.

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Local

'DOF has minimal knowledge of Munis'

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

Despite the Munis system being implemented to modernize processes in the CNMI government, many tasks are still being carried out using paper-based methods—even if Munis already offers digital alternatives—and moves to improve the system are being hindered by the lack of support from Finance Secretary Tracy B. Norita and her staff.

This was the gist of the observations Shalee M. Davis made during her consulting work for the Munis system with the CNMI government over the past year. Davis, who is consultant/owner of Davis ERP Consulting, said there appears to be a trend of reverting back to paper-based methods such as employment contracts, travel vouchers, and travel requisitions.

Munis integrates finances, payroll, human resources, purchasing, fixed assets, revenue streams, and other things. Davis said Munis is a powerful system that can greatly improve operations when utilized effectively.

But in a letter to Gov. Arnold I. Palacios on Thursday, she said she encountered challenges in achieving this goal, particularly due to the lack of support from Norita and her staff at the Department of Finance.

Davis said Norita and her current staff have minimal

» **Consultant: Goal to improve operations is challenging due to lack of support from Norita, staff**

knowledge of Munis, rendering them incapable of generating the reports necessary for the governor's office or the Legislature.

When asked for comments yesterday, Norita said a response is forthcoming.

Davis, along with other Tyler Consultants, has provided training and resources for Munis, which is an enterprise resource planning solution to help the government transition to more efficient practices.

Davis noted that her primary goal in assisting the CNMI has always been to ensure that the staff of all departments and branches of the government are proficient in using the Munis system as was intended.

Davis said she believes if there had been a contract under the Office of the Governor for her to oversee Munis, they could have achieved a lot. Unfortunately, she said, the Finance secretary's office didn't want to work with her and even took away her access to Munis.

"Without this access, I was not able to effectively do my job with the government, so I am forced to accept the realization that my services in the CNMI are not needed," she pointed out.

Davis recommends providing ongoing training for the Department of Finance staff to ensure they are proficient in using Munis; offering training programs for departments and divisions to improve their use of Munis; and implementing a new-hire training program for Munis users to onboard new employees effectively.

She recommends maintaining centralized control over federal drawdowns to ensure proper oversight and compliance with regulations; and ensuring that all cash transactions are processed for bank reconciliation within 30 days to maintain accurate financial records.

Davis also recommends creating a deputy secretary of Finance position that requires a financial background and comprehensive knowledge of Munis; that the deputy secretary should be capable of running all Munis reports and interpreting them effectively; and implementing a six-month probationary period for Cabinet members before their final appointment to evaluate their performance and suitability for the role.

She said she was optimistic when they discussed creating reports that the Finance secretary's office was not providing and she had hoped to be part of a team that could make a difference. However, she said, she only met with a certain Finance staff twice to create Accounts



Norita

Payable Aging reports, and nothing significant came of it.

The consultant said she believes there was a missed opportunity to do something impactful.

Davis is hopeful that the government finds a partner to work with, as she believes Munis is a valuable product that can bring benefits if embraced.

"My best wishes go out to the CNMI government for success in the future. I will always be thankful for the opportunity to have lived on this stunning island," said the consultant who is departing from the CNMI on March 22.

Among the issues she raised to the governor is that invoices cannot be emailed currently and must be physically brought to Financial Services for processing.

On financial statements, Davis said the staff lacks the knowledge required to run reports effectively.

She said personality conflicts within the Secretary of Finance office are hindering the training of staff by Munis experts on report generation.

Davis said that, despite being approached for training during her tenure as a government employee, the staff's ability to produce reports remains limited.

She said the staff's lack of proficiency in Munis results in improper translation of data, affecting their ability to interpret data in reports accurately.

On federal drawdowns being decentralized, the consultant said she has never encountered this practice in any

of her other clients' operations in her 11 years of working with this Munis software.

Davis said the Office of Grants Management has poor communication and management practices regarding grants. She recommends limiting the OGM to only submitting grants and transferring the drawdown function to Financial Services to ensure grant management is handled effectively.

On bank reconciliation issues, the consultant noted, among other things, that during her bank reconciliation training, a significant number of unrecorded cash transactions, some over a year old and up to two years old prior to Munis implementation, were identified. Without these transactions recorded in Munis, an accurate cash balance cannot be achieved.

"This could potentially lead to issues in a single audit," Davis said.

She said she has previously managed bank reconciliation and has never encountered unrecorded transactions, as this would be considered unacceptable.

The consultant said the Finance secretary moved the cash account to a new general ledger account without understanding the implications of this change. After training the bank reconciliation team, numerous issues were discovered with this change, and it is unclear how these will be addressed, Davis said.

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See DOF on Page 4

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MPLT wants AMP Trust Fund included in planned 902 talks

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Marianas Public Land Trust has requested Gov. Arnold I. Palacios to include the American Memorial Park Trust Fund in the planned Covenant Section 902 discussions with the U.S. government.

MPLT chair Phillip Mendiola-Long said in a recent letter to Palacios that the inclusion of the AMP Fund in the 902 talks with the U.S. would allow for a robust

exploration of the possibilities for the use of the AMP Fund income for particular projects that benefit the communities.

The AMP Fund invests the funds to benefit the development and maintenance of the American Memorial Park on Saipan.

Mendiola-Long said the loan against the Park Fund distributions resulted in the development of the Visitor Center at the American Memorial Park, which is an incredible facility today.



FERDIE DE LA TORRE

The Marianas Public Land Trust office on Capital Hill.

He underscored the need for such discussion with the U.S. Department of the Interior and National Park Service representatives to re-confirm or recalibrate the development and maintenance of the American Memorial Park for the next generation of visitors and patrons.

Mendiola-Long said the AMP Fund Investment Policy Statement is presently focused on growing the fund as the NPS has indicated that growing the funds from the investments allows for greater sums for larger projects at American Memorial Park.

For the trustees, the chairman said, they remain excited to see the continued development of American Memorial Park on Saipan and the planned NPS development on Rota and perhaps Tinian in the coming years.

Mendiola-Long said MPLT and its trustees are

ready and willing to work with Palacios' 902 Team to provide a white paper and background discussion for the conferences with the U.S.

"We believe that the Section 902 discussions are the proper and fitting venue for reviewing the AMP Funds and the potential projects at American Memorial Park," he said.

Palacios earlier stated that he wants to put together a 902 Team composed of representatives from the Legislature, Judiciary, business or private sector, and community.

The Covenant that created

the relationship between the CNMI and the U.S. provides for the 902 talks every 10 years—if either government calls for it to consult on issues affecting their relationship.

Last Oct. 24, the Senate unanimously adopted a Senate resolution introduced by Senate president Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan) to ask U.S. President Joe Biden and Palacios to consult on a number of subjects, as provided in Section 902 of the Covenant. The House of Representatives subsequently adopted the resolution.

Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council assumes acting Saipan mayor post



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

From left, Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council chair Marian DLG. Tudela, Guam Gov. Lourdes Leon Guerrero, and council vice chair Tonie Manibusan Tudela.

The Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council has assumed the post of the Saipan Mayor's Office for the seventh time this month from last year.

By law, whenever the mayor of Saipan or the mayor of the Northern Islands is to be physically absent from the Third Senatorial District, the mayor must appoint a duly elected or appointed presiding officer of the Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council to be acting mayor.

The Saipan council has taken charge of the post in June, July, November and December last year.

The mayor's last travel was to the U.S. mainland in February this year.

This month the mayor travelled on March 10-13, and, again, on March 18-21, effective triggering the assumption by the council of the mayor's post until the mayor returns to Saipan from his third off island travel this year, and his seventh since taking office in January 2023. (PR)

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PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

NMHC hereby publicly discloses that on October 24, 2023, **Kimberly Apatang Acebo**, an immediate family member of **David Mundo Apatang**, Lt. Governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, applied for assistance under the Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Housing Program.

Said applicant has been determined to be a member of a group or class of individuals who meet the national objective of urgent need and are intended to be beneficiaries of the assisted activity and is applying to receive generally the same benefits being made available to the group or class. Lt. Governor, David M. Apatang, is not and shall not be involved in the handling of this grant application.

NMHC discloses this possible conflict pursuant to 24 CFR 92.356 in order to allow any interested persons to comment before the application is considered for an exception under the applicable conflict regulations.

Written comments may be faxed to Fax No.: (670) 234-9451, mailed to P.O. Box 500514 Saipan, MP 96950, or emailed to cnmi-cdbg-dr@nmhc.gov.net on or before **March 25, 2024**.

Dated this 11th day of March, 2024.

/s/
JESSE S. PALACIOS
Corporate Director



NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Program

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

NMHC JVA No.	Positions:	Salary	Opening Date	Closing Date
2024-008	CDBG-DR Compliance Specialist (1-Position) <i>Re-Announcement</i>	UNGRADED \$25,000.00 to \$30,000.00 Per annum	March 15, 2024	March 30, 2024 4:00 PM
2024-009	CDBG-DR Accountant (1-Position) <i>Re-Announcement</i>	UNGRADED \$25,000.00 to \$30,000.00 Per annum	March 15, 2024	March 30, 2024 4:00 PM

Employment application form, detailed job description, qualification requirements and other information can be accessed at www.nmhc.gov.net and www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com.

Applicants may submit their applications through the following options: Submission at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan; Drop Box located in front of the NMHC Central Office building; the CDBG-DR Office located on the 3rd Floor of the Ladera Building, Chalan Lulau, Beach Road; or email application and documents to officemanager@nmhc.gov.net.

All applicants must complete and submit the NMHC Employment Application Form together with required documents that are listed in the Employment Application Package. Failure to provide the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. NMHC and all its properties are drug-free zones; therefore, selected applicant will be subject to pre-employment drug screening.

It is the policy of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) that the merit system will be applied and administered according to the principle of equal opportunity for all citizens and nationals as defined by its personnel regulations and the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Constitution regardless of age, race, sex, religion, political affiliation or belief, marital status, disability or place of origin.

For inquiries, please contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager, at (670) 234-6866/9447 or by email to officemanager@nmhc.gov.net. NMHC is a fair housing agency and an equal opportunity provider, lender and employer.

/s/
Jesse S. Palacios
Corporate Director

ESGR presents Seven Seals Award to Mike Sablan

By **CHRYSTAL MARINO**
chrystal_marino@saipantribune.com
CORRESPONDENT

Mike Sablan, Triple J's vice president of Finance & Administration, was honored last Thursday by the Guam-CNMI Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve and was presented with the prestigious Seven Seals Award at the Surfrider Resort Hotel in Chalan Kanoa.

Representatives of the Guam-CNMI State ESGR Committee presented Sablan with the award for his dedication and support of not only ESGR but the country. The award honors an indi-



Civilian aide to the U.S. Secretary of Army and Triple J Enterprises vice president for Finance and Administration Mike Sablan, center seated, holds the Seven Seals Award as he poses for a photo with Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve Guam-CNMI's Area chair Rita A. Sablan, second right, ESGR State ombudsman Joann T. Aquino, left, Employer Outreach coordinator Rose Igitol, right, and Triple J Enterprise officials at the Surfrider Resort Hotel lobby last Thursday.

Concepcion: We're looking for new source markets

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Marianas Visitors Authority continues to look for new source markets to boost the CNMI's tourism arrivals, which have been down 40%

as of late.

It's no secret that the CNMI continues to struggle in terms of boosting tourist arrivals back to pre-COVID 19 levels, hampered in large part by the CNMI government's decision to pivot

away from one of its tourism source market, China, and relying solely on its two other source markets, South Korea and Japan.

In an effort to replace its China market with another source, the MVA is busy

looking for new source markets on top of heavily promoting the CNMI in Japan and Korea, according to MVA managing director Chris Concepcion.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

LEADERS

From page 1

the Senate and the House of Representatives, led by Senate President Edith DeLeon Guerrero (Ind-Saipan) and Speaker Edmund Villagomez (Ind-Saipan), respectively, addressing the urgent fiscal challenges facing the CNMI.

Updates from the CNMI Department of Finance and Marianas Visitors Authority have indicated positive economic activities, including an uptick in tourism arrivals from flights and cruise ships, the

resumption of Hong Kong Airlines passenger service to the CNMI, the accelerated movement of large-scale infrastructure projects, and heightened emphasis on tax collection activities.

However, Finance Secretary Tracy Norita has indicated that although some of these activities have contributed to the increase in Hotel Occupancy tax revenues, for instance, they have not been sufficient to offset declines in other revenue categories, most notably Excise and Business Gross Revenue tax collections in the second quarter. This is an in-

dicator that imports of general commodities and hightax-value items such as cigarettes and alcohol have declined, impacting revenue forecasts and actual collections. As a result, the Commonwealth's revenue forecast for fiscal year 2024 will need to be revised downward, prompting the reevaluation of financial priorities and modification to expenditures. DOF will continue to track revenue collections to determine to what extent the current budget will need to be adjusted.

"While it's not easy to share this news, I believe we must

confront our challenges openly and work together to find solutions," said Palacios. "In light of these economic realities, I want to emphasize the importance of fiscal responsibility and prudence in managing our Commonwealth's finances. Nonetheless, in confronting fiscal challenges, we must approach them with compassion, especially when considering how the most vulnerable in our community will be affected." (PR)

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

GONZALES

From page 1

Republican Party, which will later have a primary to choose their delegate bet.

NMI Republican Party chair Diego Benavente disclosed that, as of 5pm Friday, which was the deadline to submit a letter of intent to run for delegate, only Gonzales and Kimberlyn King-Hinds have submitted their letters of intent to the party.

The Republican Party has to decide at a later date when

to hold a primary to vote on who between Gonzales and King-Hinds will be their candidate for delegate. The NMI Democratic Party's candidate for delegate is Rep. Edwin K. Propst (D-Saipan).

Gonzales launched his delegate bid on the KKMP radio station yesterday, saying he will be building upon the successes and strategic network of Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP) and leveraging the Covenant "in order to lobby for critical leadership support aimed at customizing legislation and U.S. federal

policies and to carve out specific exemptions necessary to meet the CNMI's extenuating geographical, economic, and social circumstances." The Covenant is the document that created the relationship between the CNMI and the United States.

Gonzales said the CNMI is geographically remote where 90% or more of the foods and commodities are largely imported so it must justify its case as a "Historically Underutilized Business Zone" in order to secure funding and programs to jumpstart,

revitalize, and sustain its fragile economy.

Gonzales plans to craft what he describes as sensible legislation to alleviate the "unrelenting high costs of living" of the islands.

He said he would lobby for and explore utilities infrastructure funding to build new power plants with fuel efficient and environmentally sustainable engines to reduce the cost of utility bills.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

WHIPPS

From page 1

over the next 20 years, according to Palau President Surangel Whipps Jr.

While attending the officers' induction ceremony of the Palauan Community Association-CNMI last Saturday, Whipps shared that the bill, signed into law on March 8, 2024 by U.S. President Joe Biden, came at a

much needed time.

Whipps said the Palauan economy had taken a severe blow from the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, and the country had been borrowing money to keep the government running.

Whipps said that when they signed the agreement last May to renew the Compact agreement that allows the country to have a freely associated relationship with the United States, they had

hoped to see the bill passed by Oct. 1, 2023, but that didn't happen.

"We wanted it passed by Oct. 1 because we needed the funding to begin for this fiscal year, even though we weren't technically eligible for it because our Compact doesn't expire next year. ... We had asked the United States to advance the Compact one year earlier so that we can start accessing those funds and stop loaning mon-

ey and stop putting our kids into debt and being able to start recovery," he told association members.

Aside from Palau, the other country's that also have a Compact of Free Association with the United States are the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

vidual or organization for supporting the ESGR's mission, which seeks to protect the employment rights of U.S. service members.

"We are also so very, very proud of the work Mr. Sablan has done as a civilian aide to the Secretary of the Army, as well as having supported us in our mission for the ESGR. ...Not only does he care for the service that we work with but even the entire military branch with the U.S. government," said CNMI Area chair Dr. Rita Sablan.

Upon receiving the award, Sablan shared his gratitude and said, "Our nation is in great need for young leaders

to participate in defending our values and our country. The U.S. military, as you know, is quite busy around the world, and as busy as we are, we need more leaders, more enlisted men as well. I've been doing my best to try to help recruit more to serve the military, and I'm very proud to work alongside some veterans."

The Seven Seals Award, representing all the branches of the U.S. military, is given for "meritorious leadership and initiative in support of the men and women who serve America in the National Guard and Reserve." It is signed by the ESGR national chair.

TRUMP

From page 1

voted for Trump and 21 voted for Haley. On Tinian, 134 voted for Trump, and three for Haley, while on Rota, Trump received 45 votes and Haley got one.

Haley recently announced she is exiting the Republican presidential race.

Benavente said in a later interview that, even though Trump has already met the required number of delegates in the biggest Republican primaries around the nation, they are voting in the CNMI for the presidential primary between Trump and Haley.

At the same time, Benavente said, they are also electing their six delegates who would represent the CNMI in the Republican national convention this July. The seven delegation candidates are Maria Javier, former representative Marco Peter, former senator Vinnie Sablan, Jess Taisague, Joaquin Torres, Ray Dela Cruz, and Ivan Mereb Jr. Whoever lands on seventh place will serve as an alternate. The voting started at 6:30pm and ended at 8pm.

"I'm happy. I'm super, su-

per happy," said Benavente, referring to the turnout.

Former senator Pete Reyes, who was among those who voted in the primary, said in an interview that he voted for Trump as the former president is not a stranger to the CNMI.

Reyes said history tells that Trump has been very generous to the CNMI and he understands and knows the Commonwealth.

Former governor Ralph DLG. Torres is another one who supported Trump, saying the CNMI got all the support it needed when he worked with Trump when he was still governor. Torres said they got all the waivers during super typhoons and even COVID-19 pandemic.

He said just having that relationship and acknowledging the CNMI's needs gave the Commonwealth a head start on recovery.

The former governor said it's been proven that Trump is a friend of the CNMI in terms of helping its people.

Joaquin DLG. Torres, who is the Republican Party's precinct club chairman for Precinct 1, said he voted for Trump because the former president has been proven to help the CNMI.

DOF

From page 2

software consultant for the NMI, she said she had expected to be notified and consulted before significant changes were made. However, Davis said, that did not happen before this change was implemented.

She said she advised the Department of Finance team to consult Tyler at this point as it is uncertain if they will be able to use the bank reconciliation program in Munis due to this change.

With respect to human management capital, Davis said it was never completed in Munis. She said Munis was set up, but the workflow is not being utilized.

While new employees are

entered into the Munis system, all changes, including contracts, are still processed using paper methods, she said. She pointed out that these processes could be streamlined through the Munis workflow.

Davis said she has successfully implemented this with numerous other clients, and electronic signatures within Munis are considered acceptable.

While all employees are listed in Munis with their salaries, departments are unable to view their own staff in Munis, which she deems unacceptable, as each department or division director should be able to look up their employees and run reports on their salaries and benefits.

She said employment contracts and changes are prepared using paper, which is highly inefficient.

Artists, food vendors, non-profits asked to register for Flame Tree Arts Festival

The Commonwealth Council for Arts and Culture is encouraging visual, traditional, and performing artists as well as food vendors to register for the 43rd Annual Flame Tree Arts Festival slated for April 19-21, 2024, at the Garapan Fishing Base.

Registration fees for this year's festival are as follows:

- Registered artists—free
- New and non-registered artists—\$150
- Food vendors—\$500
- Non-profit organizations—\$600

- Information booth—Free (No sales related)
- Commercial registered artists (Business license required)—\$200

Applications are available for pick up at the Commonwealth Council for Arts & Culture, Building 1312, Capital Hill, starting March 12, 2024, and will be due no later than March 29, 4pm.

Fifteen food vendor slots will be opened. CCAC must receive all completed forms no later than April 8, 2024, 4pm.

Thirty-five slots are avail-



LEIGH GASES
A customer checks out a handcrafted shell necklace in Aofia's booth during the opening night of the 42nd Flame Tree Arts Festival last year at the Civic Center in Susupe.

able for arts and crafts on a first-come, first-serve basis.

The Flame Tree Arts Festival is free to the public and is the biggest annual festival that celebrates the rich art and cultural heritage of the Commonwealth.

The theme for this year's event is "Healing, Bridging, and Thriving."

The annual festival puts arts at its finest by featuring a wide selection of artworks from the CNMI's registered and non-registered, traditional and contemporary artists, using different me-

diums and offering varied price ranges to suit anyone's taste and budget.

The event also showcases presentations from local and guest performing groups and musicians, art demonstrations, and an array of delightful festival food favorites for an enjoyable weekend with family and friends.

For more information, visit the Commonwealth Council for Arts and Culture Office located behind the Carolinian Affairs Office in Garapan, or contact (670) 287-1981. (PR)



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"FINANCIAL AND COMPLIANCE AUDIT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023"

Copies of the proposal package may be picked up at the Commonwealth Economic Development Authority office, at 2390 Beach Road Oleai Unit 205, Saipan, during regular working hours, Monday through Friday, except CNMI holidays, or on our website at www.developcnmi.com

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTIONS 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

The Commonwealth reserves the right to reject any and all bids and proposals in whole or in part, and to waive any imperfection in a proposal in the best interest of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. All proposals shall become the property of the CNMI government.

/S/ MANUEL A. SABLAN
Executive Director

/S/ BRIEN S. NICHOLAS JR.
Acting Director
Division of Procurement Services



COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
CNMI GOVERNMENT
Man Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 2nd Floor Arrival Bldg.
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950
Phone: (670) 237-6500/1 • Fax: (670) 234-5962
Website: www.cnmiports.com

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATION STATEMENTS FOR
ARCHITECTURAL/ENGINEERING DESIGN SERVICES

FRANCISCO C. ADA/SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
TERMINAL ROOF LEAK REPAIRS
Project No. CPA-SA-001-24

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) is a public corporation and autonomous agency of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). In accordance with its Procurement Rules and Regulations, CPA is soliciting statements of professional qualifications from interested consultants for Architectural and Engineering (A/E) Design Services for the Terminal Roof Leak Repairs Project at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Project No. CPA-SA-001-24.

The project is being funded by the Commonwealth Ports Authority and is in accordance and compliance with CPA's Procurement Rules and Regulations, Section 40-50-202, Architect-Engineer Design and Construction Management Services.

The Request for Qualification (RFQ) Package is available at CPA's Administration Office, 2nd floor of the arrival terminal at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport. No fee is required for obtaining the RFQ package. Electronic copies may be made available upon written request to Ms. Wendi Prater at wprater@cnmiports.com or Ms. Sheri Llagas at receptionist@cnmiports.com.

Questions regarding this request must be submitted to Ms. Prater, CPA's Executive Assistant/Project Manager, via email to wprater@cnmiports.com or hand delivered to the CPA Administration Office, by no later than 5:00 p.m. CHST, Friday, March 8, 2024.

The statements of professional qualification will be evaluated based on the criteria available in the RFQ package.

Interested Consultants are requested to submit one (1) original, four (4) copies and one (1) electronic version in .pdf of their statements of professional qualifications no later than **5:00 p.m. CHST, FRIDAY, MARCH 22, 2024**. Statements of qualification must be presented by a combination of both brochures and the use of current U.S. Government Standard Form 330.

The CPA reserves the right to reject any or all statements of professional qualification for any reason, if in its sole opinion to do so would be in its best interest.

/s/ LEO B. TUDELA
Executive Director

Date: February 12, 2024

SUPERVISOR RETAIL STORE
- HS2024-02
Tinian, CNMI

SUPERVISOR RETAIL STORE, HUANG SHUN CORPORATION - Tinian, CNMI.

Provide customer service by greeting and assisting customers and responding to customer inquiries and complaints. Direct and supervise employees engaged in sales, inventory-taking, reconciling cash receipts, or in performing services for customers. Examine merchandise to ensure that it is correctly priced and displayed and that it functions as advertised. Monitor sales activities to ensure that customers receive satisfactory service and quality goods. Instruct staff on how to handle difficult and complicated sales. Assign employees to specific duties. Keep records of purchases, sales, and requisitions. Perform work activities of subordinates, such as cleaning and organizing shelves and displays and selling merchandise. Plan and prepare work schedules and keep records of employees' work schedules and time cards. Review inventory and sales records to prepare reports for management and budget departments. Inventory stock and reorder when inventory drops to a specified level. Establish and implement policies, goals, objectives, and procedures for the department. Examine products purchased for resale or received for storage to assess the condition of each product or item. Enforce safety, health, and security rules. Estimate consumer demand and determine the types and amounts of goods to be sold. Confer with company officials to develop methods and procedures to increase sales, expand markets, and promote business. Formulate pricing policies for merchandise, according to profitability requirements. Hire, train, and evaluate personnel in sales or marketing establishments, promoting or firing workers when appropriate. Plan and coordinate advertising campaigns and sales promotions and prepare merchandise displays and advertising copy. Establish credit policies and operating procedures. Plan budgets and authorize payments and merchandise returns. Will supervise 4 Cashier's.

Minimum Requirements: Minimum of 12 months experience in retail and wholesale accounting and operation.

Workplace: U-Save Market Building, Lot #014 T 22, San Jose Village, Tinian 96952 CNMI

To apply: Please send your resume to Huang Shun Corporation, PO BOX 520335, Tinian, MP 96952 or e-mail to tinianpopz@hotmail.com Job Advertisement Number – **HS2024-02**

COOK - BP2024-02
Saipan, CNMI

ONE (1) COOK, Allied Construction Corporation dba: Barny's Pizza., Saipan, CNMI

Cook that we are trying to employ will be working in a catering business serving in the cafeteria and will Assist in the preparation and cooking of scheduled meals. Follow direction from the kitchen supervisors in following standard recipe and procedure. Must maintain orderliness and cleanliness of preparation and cooking areas. Clean and sanitized counter tops, tables, tools and kitchen equipment. Cook foodstuffs according to menus, special dietary or nutritional restrictions, and numbers of portions to be served. Direct activities of one or more workers who assist in preparing and serving meals. Bake breads, rolls, and other pastries. Clean, cut, and cook meat, fish, and poultry. Compile and maintain records of food use and expenditures. Requisition food supplies based on estimates of future needs. Any other job requirement that maybe asked in the pre and post production of meals.

Minimum Requirements: High School Graduate plus 12 monthsexperience.

Workplace: TEXAS ROAD, BARNYS PIZZA BUILDING Susupe Village Saipan, CNMI.

To apply: Please send your resume to Barny's Pizza, PMB 55 Box 10001, Saipan, MP 96950 or e-mail to **alliedspn@gmail.com** Job Number – **BP2024-02**

BOOKKEEPER - HS2024-01
Tinian, CNMI

BOOKKEEPER, HUANG SHUN CORPORATION - Tinian, CNMI.

Operate computers programmed with accounting software to record, store, and analyze information. Check figures, postings, and documents for correct entry, mathematical accuracy, and proper codes. Classify, record, and summarize numerical and financial data to compile and keep financial records, using journals and ledgers or computers. Debit, credit, and total accounts on computer spreadsheets and databases, using specialized accounting software. Operate 10-key calculators, typewriters, and copy machines to perform calculations and produce documents. Receive, record, and bank cash, checks, and vouchers. Comply with federal, state, and company policies, procedures, and regulations. Compile statistical, financial, accounting or auditing reports and tables pertaining to such matters as cash receipts, expenditures, accounts payable and receivable, and profits and losses. Code documents according to company procedures. Reconcile or note and report discrepancies found in records.

Minimum Requirements: Associate Degree in Accounting or Business, foreign educational equivalent accepted, plus 12 months experience in retail and wholesale accounting and operation.

Workplace: U-Save Market Building, Lot #014 T 22, San Jose Village, Tinian 96952 CNMI

To apply: Please send your resume to Huang Shun Corporation, PO BOX 520335, Tinian, MP 96952 or e-mail to tinianpopz@hotmail.com Job Advertisement Number – **HS2024-01**

Cafeteria Workers
(Supervisor) - BP2024-01
Saipan, CNMI

TWO (2) Cafeteria Workers (Supervisor), Allied Construction Corporation dba: Barny's Pizza., Saipan, CNMI

Supervise daily cafeteria operation which includes being the head cashier, making sure that the contractual obligations and standards are being met. Supervisor will also be the HACCP head of the service location. Monitor performances of service staff and coordination with the school administration, staff teacher and parents. The supervisor will also be in charge of inventory and supplies requisition, see to it that maintenance of cafeteria and surroundings is clean and sanitized condition at all times. Ensure that the food is of the highest quality possible, and that food is stored in a safe and sanitary manner. Answer student and teacher complaints. Report any shortages to the person in charge of ordering or in some cases, requisition them yourself.

Minimum Requirements: High School Graduate, plus 12 months experience in food catering operation, 3 months training on food preparation, serving guidelines and proper handling.

Workplace: TEXAS ROAD, BARNYS PIZZA BUILDING Susupe Village Saipan, CNMI.

To apply: Please send your resume to Barny's Pizza, PMB 55 Box 10001, Saipan, MP 96950 or e-mail to **alliedspn@gmail.com** Job Number – **BP2024-01**

CNMI accepted into SHEEO's Community of Practice

The CNMI celebrated a significant milestone as it joined the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association Community of Practice, marking the first U.S. territory to join since the community's inception 10 years ago.

SHEEO was established in 1954. Their primary goal is to advance public higher education and its role in society. SHEEO works toward this goal by supporting state higher education agencies and coordinating efforts among them. This includes advocating for policies that promote access, affordability, and eq-

uity in higher education, as well as facilitating collaboration and knowledge-sharing among member states.

In November 2023, driven by the CNMI Statewide Longitudinal Data System Program's commitment to progress and in collaboration with Northern Marianas College, the CNMI eagerly applied to become a member of SHEEO's esteemed Community of Practice. This decision was spurred by the recognition of the invaluable opportunity this platform presents to forge connections and exchange knowledge with counterparts

across states. The CNMI SLDS envisions this as the inception of a dynamic network, fostering ongoing collaboration and the exchange of innovative solutions.

The CNMI's application to SHEEO's Community of Practice is driven by a clear purpose: to engage in a collective effort aimed at enhancing our data initiatives, understanding that continuous improvement is paramount to our success — specifically aimed to harness the resources and expertise available through this community to address critical areas of development within the CNMI's



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Staff members from the Virginia and Colorado offices of State Higher Education Executive Officers share a moment with the CNMI state team during their visit to Washington, D.C. The CNMI team had traveled the longest distance among all state teams, spending approximately 36 hours in transit.

data ecosystem.

After undergoing a rigorous selection process, the CNMI SHEEO state team, comprising Dr. Annette Pladevega Sablan and Jeaniffer Cubangbang from the CNMI SLDS Program (under the Public School System), along with Vilma Reyes and Monique Sablan from NMC, were successfully chosen in December 2023. This esteemed team joined counterparts from 15 states to delve into the opportunities and challenges of multi-state and multi-sector data projects. State teams benefited from professional development and technical as-

See SHEEO on Page 7

CIVIL ENGINEERING TECHNICIAN – HONGYE 2024-01 Saipan, CNMI

One (1) CIVIL ENGINEERING TECHNICIAN, HONG YE RENTAL & CONSTRUCTION, LTD., Saipan, CNMI

Apply theory and principles of civil engineering in planning, designing, and overseeing construction and maintenance of structures and facilities under the direction of engineering staff or physical scientists. Tasks include: Calculate dimensions, square footage, profile and component specifications, and material quantities using calculator or computer; read and review project blueprints and structural specifications to determine dimensions of structure or system and material requirements; draft detailed dimensional drawings and design layouts for projects and to ensure conformance to specifications; confer with supervisor to determine project details such as plan reparation, acceptance testing, and evaluation of field conditions; analyze proposed site factors and design maps, graphs, tracings, and diagrams to illustrate findings. Prepare reports and document project activities and data; report maintenance problems occurring at project site to supervisor and negotiate changes to resolve system conflicts; inspect project site and evaluate contractor work to detect design malfunctions and ensure conformance to design specifications and applicable codes; conduct materials test and analysis using tools and equipment and applying engineering knowledge; develop plans and estimate costs for installation of systems, utilization of facilities, or construction of structures; develop project budgets by estimating the cost of project activities; evaluate facility to determine suitability for occupancy and square footage availability and negotiate prices for new contracts or for modifications to existing contracts with contractors.

Minimum Requirements: Associate's degree in Engineering, or related field, foreign educational equivalent accepted, plus 24 months of related work experience; Must be knowledgeable in cost estimating, planning, scheduling, site inspection and familiarization of materials, methods and tools involved in construction or related.

Workplace: 3786 AFETNAS ROAD SAN ANTONIO, Saipan CNMI.

To apply: Please send your resume to Ace HONG YE RENTAL & CONSTRUCTION, LTD., PO BOX 502997, Saipan, MP 96950 or e-mail to hongye-mei@hotmail.com
Job Number – HONGYE-2024-01



NORTHERN MARIANAS TECHNICAL INSTITUTE

P.O. Box 504880 Saipan MP 96950
Tel. No.: (670) 235-6684

INVITATION TO BID

NMTI-ITB 2024001 NORTHERN MARIANAS TECHNICAL INSTITUTE WORKFORCE CAREER TRAINING FACILITY

The Northern Marianas Technical Institute (NMTech), located in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands is soliciting sealed bids for the construction of the Northern Marianas Technical Institute Workforce Career Training Facility. This project is being funded by the Northern Marianas Technical Institute Workforce Career Training Facility Construction Project from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration, EDA Project No. 07-79-07543.

This solicitation is in accordance with NMTech Procurement Regulations §3000-225. To also include provisions of NMTech Procurement Regulations, Section §3000-525 prohibiting kickbacks and gratuities, Section §3000-530 prohibition against contingent fees shall apply.

The project package will be available in digital format only on **Friday, March 18, 2024**, at the NMTech Procurement Office, located at Lower Base, Saipan. Monday through Friday from 8:30am-5:30pm only.

A **Pre-bid Conference** will be held at the Northern Marianas Technical Institute, Lower Base Campus, Saipan, CNMI at **10:00am ChST, March 26, 2024**.

All questions or inquiries regarding this ITB is to be submitted via email only to: procurement@nmtechcnmi.org, no later than **9:00 a.m., March 28, 2024, by email only**. All questions and answers will be shared with all prospective bidders.

Bidders located outside of the CNMI must fill out and submit the Notice of Intent to Bid Form to the NMTech Procurement Officer no later than **10:00am ChST, April 18, 2024**.

Sealed bids for this project shall be submitted with one (1) original, one (1) hard copy and one (1) flash drive containing an electronic copy of the bid to the NMTech Procurement Officer located at the NMTI campus, Lower Base, Saipan, MP-96950 no later than **10:00 am, local time, Chamorro Standard Time, April 18, 2024 and must be marked "NMTI-ITB 2024001"**.

NMTech reserves the right to reject any and all bids, or portions thereof, and waive immaterial defects if to do so would be in the best interest of the Northern Marianas Technical Institute.

/s/Jodina C. Attao
Chief Executive Officer

/s/ Amy Lynn Babauta
Procurement Officer



CNMI Public School System Part B Special Education Program



Public Participation Requirement

Pursuant to the Part B Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Public Participation Requirements, the Public School System Special Education Program is required to provide at least 60 days prior to submission of the grant application on May 22, 2024, a 60 day circulation notice with an opportunity for public comment on the application for at least 30 days during that period for public comments from the general public, including individuals with disabilities and parents of youth with disabilities.

60-day Public Comment Period: March 18, 2024 – May 16, 2024
30-day Public Circulation Period: April 01, 2024 – April 30, 2024

Hard copies of the Special Education Grant Application are available from Monday – Friday, 8:00am – 4:00pm at the Office of Special Education Program, Capitol Hill Building #1224. You may also access the grant application on the PSS Website at: <https://www.cnmiipss.org/special-education-program>

Comments may be hand delivered to the Special Education Program office located in Capitol Hill Building #1224 or phone your comments in to:

Special Education Program (670) 237-3029

For more information, please contact Ms. Donna Flores, Director, Special Education Program at (670) 237-3029

DENTAL LABORATORY TECHNICIAN (DENTAL ASSISTANT)– SDA-2024-01 Saipan, CNMI

DENTAL LABORATORY TECHNICIAN (DENTAL ASSISTANT): THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST MISSION OF THE NMI dba: SAIPAN SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CLINIC, SAIPAN, CNMI

Assist in taking radiographs, probing readings and intraoral photos when needed. Set up trays with instruments for dentist and hygienist. Removing used trays from treatment room and sterilize prior to next patient. Primary Assistant Functions: Primary assistants are assigned to a specific dentist. Keep track of dentists schedule, to be sure he/she stays on schedule. Assist the dentist during a variety of treatment procedures. Keep track of the dentists specific supplies - bonding material, instruments, etc. Keep track of all of the dentists Lab cases. A log must be kept for each dentist. Monitor the TA box and take the chart as soon as possible. Communicate with the front office if running behind or a change in the dentists schedule. Request help if needed from other assistants or if the secondary assistant is unable to help. Leave (time off) should coincide with the specific dentists leave.

Minimum Requirements: High School Graduate, 12 months experience.

Workplace: SDA DENTAL CLINIC QUARTER MASTER ROAD, CHALAN LAULAU VILLAGE, Saipan, CNMI

To apply: Please send your resume to SDA DENTAL CLINIC, PO BOX 500169, Saipan, MP 96950 or e-mail to accounting@saipansdadental.com
Job Number – SDA-2024-01

MEDICAL ASSISTANT– SDA-2024-02 Saipan, CNMI

MEDICAL ASSISTANT: THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST MISSION OF THE NMI dba: SAIPAN SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CLINIC, SAIPAN, CNMI

Must be able to perform administrative and certain clinical duties under the direction of a doctor. Administrative duties may include scheduling appointments, maintaining patients records, billing and coding information for billing and insurance purposes. Clinical duties may include taking and recording vital signs and medical histories, preparing patients who are put in general anesthesia and giving instructions before and after treatment administering medications under the direction of the doctors.

Minimum Requirements: High School Graduate, At least 12 months experience as medical healthcare assistant in a clinic or hospital setting.

Workplace: SDA DENTAL CLINIC QUARTER MASTER ROAD, CHALAN LAULAU VILLAGE, Saipan, CNMI

To apply: Please send your resume to SDA DENTAL CLINIC, PO BOX 500169, Saipan, MP 96950 or e-mail to accounting@saipansdadental.com
Job Number – SDA-2024-02



COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY CNMI GOVERNMENT

Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 2nd Floor Arrival Bldg.
P.O. BOX 500165 • SAIPAN • MP 96950
Phone: (670) 237-6500/1 • Fax: (670) 234-5962
Website: www.cnmiports.com



NOTICE OF INVITATION FOR BID Automated Teller Machine FRANCISCO C. ADA/SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

**Project No.: CPA-IFB-006-24
CPA Concession No.: SAT-2024-01**

Notice is hereby given that the Commonwealth Ports Authority (the "CPA") is accepting sealed bids, subject to the terms and conditions of the Invitation for Bid (the "IFB"), and other contract provisions, for bids from firms, companies, and/or corporations to provide Automated Teller Machine at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport.

The IFB will be issued and available for pick-up beginning March 15, 2024, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday to Friday, at the Accounting Office, 2nd Floor, Departure Building, Saipan International Airport. CPA offices are closed on its austerities days and holidays. The IFB includes a layout and requirements. All responses to this IFB shall also take into account any and/or all costs that will be charged to the bidder awarded the contract for the project. Prospective bidders will be required to pay an administrative fee of \$100.00 for costs associated with handling and consideration of the bid.

Questions and/or clarification concerning this project shall be in writing and sent to the attention of the Executive Director through email at cpa.admin@pticom.com with copy to Joy Ann Tenorio at joy.tenorio@cnmiports.com no later than April 2, 2024.

All bids shall be sealed and marked on the cover package outside as follows: **"INVITATION FOR BID SUBMISSION: CONFIDENTIAL, AUTOMATED TELLER MACHINE SERVICES, COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY CPA-IFB-006-24."** One (1) original and two (2) copies of the bid must be submitted no later than **3:00 p.m., Chamorro Standard Time, April 18, 2024**, to the Authority Administration Section, Office of the Executive Director, 2nd Floor, Arrival Building, Saipan International Airport.

Bids will be opened on April 18, 2024, at 3:00 p.m. at the Meeting Room, Saipan International Airport. Bids are not required to include a prepaid minimum concession fee. The concessions are for the right to provide Automated Teller Machine services at a certain designated location within the Saipan International Airport for a period of five (5) years and requires the concessionaire to operate such concession to the satisfaction of the Commonwealth Ports Authority.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason, if in its sole opinion to do so, would be in CPA's best interest. CPA further reserves the right to waive any defects in said bids if in its sole opinion to do so would be in CPA's best interest. All bids shall become property of the Commonwealth Ports Authority.

FOR THE COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

LEO B. TUDELA
Executive Director

Date

SHEEO

From page 6

sistance provided by nationally recognized experts, gaining insights into benchmark practices from across the nation.

The CNMI SHEEO state team attended the annual Community of Practice event from Feb. 7 to 8, 2024 in Alexandria, VA. This event, designed to enhance state postsecondary data systems, offered a platform for collaborative problem-solving and knowledge sharing among peers. Key topics on the agenda included cross-state data sharing, connecting education and workforce data, and strategies for successful multi-state projects.

Participation in SHEEO's Community of Practice aligns with the CNMI's commitment to excellence in data management and policy development, as outlined in their recently awarded FY2023 SLDS Grant awarded to PSS. This grant emphasizes expanding data systems, establishing robust cross-agency data governance frameworks, and strengthening the capacity of program staff and key collaborators to leverage data effectively.

The CNMI SLDS and NMC have outlined a comprehensive plan to implement and facilitate training for partners. The goal



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

From left, Jeaniffer Cubangbang, CNMI Statewide Longitudinal Data System technical manager; Vilma Reyes, Northern Marianas College director from Office of Institutional Effectiveness; Dr. Annette Pladevega Sablan, CNMI SLDS project director; and Monique Sablan, NMC director for Community Development Institute.

is specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound. The SMART Goal is to ensure that within 24 months, at least one key stakeholder from each P20W partner agency completes the pilot data literacy mastery program.

Dr. Annette Pladevega Sablan, project director of the CNMI SLDS, expressed enthusiasm about the opportunities ahead: "Being selected for SHEEO's Community of Practice is a true honor for our team at the CNMI Public School System and Northern Marianas College. This opportunity has empowered us to connect, collaborate, and envision positive change in our community. With the dedication and expertise of our local profes-

sionals, I am even more hopeful for the future of the CNMI. Thank you to the SHEEO selection committee and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for this opportunity."

For more information about CNMI's participation in SHEEO's Community of Practice, please contact: slds@cnmipss.org.

About SHEEO

The State Higher Education Executive Officers Association is the national association of state higher education executive officers who serve statewide coordinating and governing boards and other state policy agencies for higher education. SHEEO provides education, advocacy, and support to its members, enabling



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

CNMI State Team in front of Day 2's state team activity. From left, Jeaniffer Cubangbang, CNMI SLDS technical manager; Vilma Reyes, NMC director from Office of Institutional Effectiveness; Dr. Annette Pladevega Sablan, CNMI SLDS project director; and Monique Sablan, NMC director for Community Development Institute.

them to effectively promote public policies and initiatives that support higher education.

About CNMI SLDS

The CNMI PSS is dedicated to providing quality education and support services to Saipan, Tinian, and Rota stu-

dents. With a focus on innovation and excellence, CNMI PSS strives to empower students for success in a rapidly evolving world.

The CNMI SLDS Program is a state office that collects and integrates the CNMI's education and workforce data

that bridges the gap between information and action so that policymakers, practitioners, and the public can make the best decisions possible.

The CNMI's SLDS program consists of Sablan (project director), Shawna Indalecio (project specialist), Cubangbang (SLDS technical manager), and Ferdinand Ngirmekur (data privacy specialist).

The SLDS is a joint effort of the U.S. Department of Education, state education agency, and other stakeholders, including educators, researchers, and policymakers. The SLDS website is just one of the many tools that the system provides to help education professionals make informed decisions and improve educational outcomes.

To learn more about the Statewide Longitudinal Data System and its new website, visit <https://slds.cnmipss.org>. (PR)



COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950-1055
Phone: (670) 237-6500 • Fax: (670) 234-5962
E-Mail Address: cpa.admin@pticom.com • Website: www.cnmiports.com

AMENDED JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT # 04-2024

Opening date: March 04, 2024 Closing date: March 22, 2024

Location: SAIPAN

Position(s): (2) AOA Controller-I
(1) ARFF Mechanic II
(1) Comptroller
(1) Custodial
(1) Master Electrician
(1) Procurement Technician
(1) Receptionist/Secretary
(1) Safety Officer/Quality Control Specialist

SALARY

PL 5/1 to 5/12 (\$8.83/hr to \$15.10/hr)
PL 6/1 to 6/12 (\$9.27/hr to \$15.85/hr)
UNGRADED
PL 1/1 to 1/12 (\$7.26/hr to 12.42/hr)
PL 19/1 to 19/12 (\$17.48/hr to \$29.90/hr)
PL 9/1 to 9/12 (\$10.73/hr to \$18.35/hr)
PL 5/1 to 5/12 (\$8.83/hr to \$15.10/hr)
Minimum: \$36,356.89/annum
Maximum: \$62,182.63/annum

Location: TINIAN

Position(s): (1) General Maintenance

SALARY

PL 2/1 to 2/12 (\$7.63/hr to \$13.04/hr)

Location: ROTA

Position(s): (1) AOA Controller/Ground Maintenance-I
(2) Custodial/Maintenance-I

SALARY

PL 5/1 to 5/12 (\$8.83/hr to \$15.10/hr)
PL 2/1 to 2/12 (\$7.63/hr to \$13.04/hr)

Employment Application must be accompanied with a copy of all required diploma/certificates and/or official sealed transcripts, original copy of recent police record not more than six (6) months old, original copy of U.S. Department of Defense Form DD214 for retired members or veterans of our Armed Forces, and other documents as required for the position. Public Law 11-70 requires that all male applicants age 18 to 25 years old must submit documentation evidencing his registration with the Federal Selective Service System. All applications and required documents must be submitted to the **CPA Administration Office, 2nd Floor Arrival Building, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport or CPA Administration Office, Tinian International Airport, or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport.** Failure to provide any of the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. Certain vacancies may require written and/or physical test. Selected applicants will be subjected to pre-employment drug screening, 10-year Criminal History Record Check and 49 CFR Part 1542.209(d) Requirements. CPA reserves the right to waive or implement other qualifications to meet its needs. The deadline for submission of applications and required documents to the CPA Administration Office (Saipan) or at the Tinian International Airport or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport is no later than **5:00 P.M. on Friday, March 22, 2024.**

Detailed information on qualifications and position descriptions for the above positions may be picked up along with the application form from Monday-Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., except on holidays and austerity, at the CPA Administration Office (2nd Floor) of the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, Arrival Terminal or CPA Admin, Office at the Tinian International Airport or at the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport. For additional information, please contact the CPA Human Resources Office by email at lorna.robert@cnmiports.com and hrrspecialist@cnmiports.com or by phone at (670)237-6500.

CPA is an Equal Opportunity Employer and CPA hires those who are legally entitled to employment in the CNMI.

LEO B. TUDELA
Executive Director



NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp | Website: <http://www.nmhc.gov.net>
Tels: (670) 234-9447 | 234-6866 | 234-7670 | Fax: (670) 234-9021

PUBLIC NOTICE

This Notice is paid by the NMHC with HUD funds.

NOTICE OF FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT AND
NOTICE OF INTENT TO REQUEST RELEASE OF FUNDS
03/08/2024

Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Northern Marianas Housing Corporation
Saipan MP, 96950
Telephone(s): (670)234-9447/6866

These notices shall satisfy the above-cited two separate but related procedural notification requirements.

REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF FUNDS

On or after March 25, 2024, the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands will submit a request to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Washington D.C., for the release of Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Act, 2019 P.L. 116-20, enacted on January 27, 2020, announced via Federal Register Notice, to undertake the following activity and purposes in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands:

Project/Activity Type	Purpose	Location	Total Project Cost
Mountain View Estates The "Mountain View Estates" project proposes to build five (5) housing units: each consisting of two (2) bedrooms and one (1) bathroom.	Affordable Rental Housing	Carolinas Heights, Tinian	Approximately \$800,000.00 of CDBG-DR funds; no other funds are to be used.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands has determined that the above-listed project will have no significant impact on the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) is not required. Additional project information is contained in the Environmental Review Record (ERR) on the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) website at www.nmhc.gov.net, or NMHC Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) website at www.cnmicdbgdr.com, or on file at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan or NMHC CDBG-DR Office in Beach Road, Chalan Laulau, Saipan, examined during regular work hours, Monday through Friday except CNMI Holidays, from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Any individual, group, or agency may submit written comments on the ERR to Northern Marianas Housing Corporation. You may submit comments to the following options: via mail to P.O. Box 500514, Saipan, MP 96950; direct delivery to the central office in Garapan, Saipan or drop-box located in front of the building; and via email at officemanager@nmhc.gov.net. All comments received by **March 25, 2024, 4:00 p.m.** will be considered by the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands prior to authorizing the submission of a request for release of funds. Comments should specify which Notice they are addressing.

ENVIRONMENTAL CERTIFICATION

The Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands certifies to the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Washington D.C. that the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and Governor Arnold I. Palacios consent to accept the jurisdiction of the Federal Courts if an action is brought to enforce responsibilities in relation to the environmental review process, and that these responsibilities have been satisfied. The U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Washington D.C. approval of the certification satisfies its responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 and related laws and authorities, and allows the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands to use Program Funds.

OBJECTIONS TO RELEASE OF FUNDS

The U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Washington D.C will accept objections to its release of fund and the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands certification for a period of **fifteen days** following the anticipated submission date or its actual receipt of the request (whichever is later) only if they are on one of the following bases: (a) the certification was not executed by the Certifying Officer of the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands; (b) the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands has omitted a step or failed to make a decision or finding required by HUD regulations at 24 CFR part 58; (c) the grant recipient or other participants in the development process have committed funds, incurred costs or undertaken activities not authorized by 24 CFR Part 58 before approval of a release of funds by U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD); or (d) another Federal agency acting pursuant to 40 CFR Part 1504 has submitted a written finding that the project is unsatisfactory from the standpoint of environmental quality. Objections must be prepared and submitted in accordance with the required procedures (24 CFR Part 58, Sec. 58.76) and shall be addressed to Ms. Tennille Smith Parker, DRSI Division Director, HUD, via email at Tennille.S.Parker@hud.gov or via telephone (202)402-4649. Potential objectors should contact e U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to verify the actual last day of the objection period.

/s/
Arnold I. Palacios
Governor of the CNMI

Opinion

Hafa Adail

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
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Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
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MEMBER

AP The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

We need immigrants. A bracing message from a titan of corporate America

The U.S. immigration system is broken. Voices on all sides of this debate can agree on that, if not where to cast the blame. But our need for economic growth still dictates that migration at the sort of levels we're seeing now must continue in order to keep the U.S. population rising enough to provide the labor we need and keep the economy healthy.

The Congressional Budget Office, the nonpartisan fiscal scorekeepers for Congress, issued a report last month that was an eye-opener for many. CBO projected \$7 trillion of additional economic growth over the coming decade thanks to the net influx of migrants, which the agency hadn't accounted for previously in its assessments.

This country's native population is aging, and the workforce is suffering as a result. Thanks mostly to net immigration gains, CBO projects the U.S. labor force will add 5.2 million workers by 2033. Shut off that source of growth, as some extremist voices are urging, and our labor force won't be sufficient.

Still, statistical findings from a federal agency, even when they're as consequential as those, rarely command immediate attention.

That why we were struck when we heard the same message with our own ears recently from Brian Moynihan, CEO of Charlotte, North Carolina-based Bank of America, the nation's second-largest bank. Moynihan met with the Tribune Editorial Board to discuss a wide variety of issues, but the one that lingered the most with us was his message on immigration.

"It's a shame we can't fix it," Moynihan said of our lousy system. And he had some very good reasons for saying so.

Our birthrate being what it is, U.S. population growth without the influx is only around 0.5% annually, he told us. It needs to be more like 1.5% to keep the economy healthy (and to meet our massive health care and retirement obligations to our growing senior citizen population). "It's a pure math question," he said, noting that U.S. women already participate so broadly in the workforce now that adding to that number is no longer a viable source of major growth. So that leaves a need for newcomers.

As longtime head of one of the few true national banking franchises in the U.S., Moynihan is in a unique position to opine on this. He sees more real-time data on the economy and consumer behavior than most. We should listen to him—and other business figures who've long advocated for more immigrants, not fewer.

In Washington, D.C., many extremists see Americans' worries about the chaos at the southern border as a political issue to be exploited rather than a problem to be solved.

See WE on Page 9

JUDGE @2024 KING FEATURES



GUESS WHICH ONE THE U.S. HOUSE WANTS TO BAN BECAUSE IT'S A SECURITY THREAT.

The border crisis factor no one talks about: American guns

When President Joe Biden and former President Donald Trump visited Texas at the end of February, each spoke about migration and border security. Biden called for restricting asylum. Trump engaged in fear-mongering, blaming migrants for crime. But neither mentioned one of the main reasons the border has drawn so many migrants and asylum seekers—the flow of guns from the U.S. into Mexico.

This link between our guns and the people who seek safety at the border is particularly clear in Texas. Gov. Greg Abbott's hard-line approach to stopping migrants from crossing completely ignores the state's role as a main source of weapons for criminal groups and violence in Mexico, which is a result of its loose gun regulations. It's no wonder that Mexicans are the largest national group among the hundreds of thousands who try to cross the U.S. southern border each year.

Since I began volunteering in 2015 at a migrant aid clinic in Nogales, Mexico, I have met the men, women and children who make up these statistics. Various presidents and Congresses have handed down a hodgepodge of policies intended to solve the perpetual crisis on the border, but the reasons people try to escape Mexico and the difficulties they encounter on their journeys have not changed in any meaningful way.

At the clinic, mothers and fathers told us why they had to flee. Somebody's brother was murdered. Somebody's cousin was kidnapped. Somebody else could no longer pay extortion fees. These migrants were fleeing insecurity rather than poverty, although the two often overlapped. Criminal violence is a problem throughout Mexico. In 2023, more than 110,000 Mexicans were officially listed as disappeared. Close to 90% of all crimes are never reported and 9 in 10 homicides go unpunished. In some parts of the country, law enforcement works with organized crime groups. The families I met did not have an option to go to the police. They packed what they could carry, hoping to find safety once they crossed the border.

It's not only people that are affected by the proliferation of guns. The criminal organizations forcing families to flee are often also running the Mexican drug trade. When fentanyl is smuggled across the border, usually through ports of entry and often by U.S. citizens, it wreaks havoc in our communities. But the drugs would not be coming north in such large numbers if not for our guns flowing south.

One reason that American guns have such an outsized role in Mexican crime is because unlike the United States, Mexico has very strict gun laws. There are only two gun stores in the country where vetted citizens can purchase a limited number of relatively small-caliber weapons. But in Texas and Arizona, states that

By IEVA JUSIONYTE

Los Angeles Times

Ieva Jusionyte is an associate professor of international security and anthropology at the Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs at Brown University. Her new book is *Exit Wounds: How America's Guns Fuel Violence Across the Border*.



share the longest border with Mexico, there are more than 7,000 federally licensed gun dealers and pawnbrokers. And while the majority of guns recovered in crime scenes around Mexico are traced to stores in these two states, some come from as far as Arkansas, Florida and Massachusetts. It is estimated that between 200,000 and more than half a million firearms purchased in gun stores, at gun shows or through private sales in the United States are trafficked south across the border.

In 2021, the Mexican government sued U.S. gunmakers, including Colt, Smith & Wesson and Barrett, for their "overall destabilizing effect on Mexican society." A year later, it filed another lawsuit against gun dealers in Arizona who sold firearms that routinely ended up in the hands of organized crime groups in Mexico. Both cases are still winding through the courts.

The 2005 Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act shields U.S. gun makers and gun dealers from civil liability for injuries to people in the United States. But the Mexican government argues that this exemption does not apply to Mexico. Just as U.S. companies "may not dump toxic waste or other pollutants to poison Mexicans across the border," it insists in the lawsuit, "they may not send their weapons of war into the hands of the cartels, causing repeated and grievous harm, and then claim immunity from accountability." The Mexican government shares responsibility for failing to protect its citizens. But its failure to uphold the rule of law in part results from the firepower of organized crime groups, armed with American-made military-style weapons.

It is a vicious circle of violence. Without the river of firearms flowing south, the northbound flow of drugs would diminish. Without the threat of gun violence, many families would not risk their lives trying to reach and cross the border, seeking safety for themselves and for their children. The exodus of people from Mexico and other countries in the region and the injuries we treat at the clinic are in large part the result of America's refusal to control the gun industry, allowing it to wound communities on both sides of the wall and perpetuate the never-ending border crisis.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Mars rocks are a science prize the US can't afford to lose

By PAUL BYRNE and VICKY HAMILTON
LOS ANGELES TIMES

NASA does difficult, inspiring and ambitious things—and it does them, in the immortal words of President John F. Kennedy, because they are hard. NASA's most ambitious planetary project yet is Mars Sample Return, a partnership with the European Space Agency to robotically collect and bring back to Earth scientifically invaluable rocks from Mars for study in labs here. But the mission is in trouble.

Mars Sample Return represents the culmination of decades of planning by the planetary science community, and it has been the top-ranked scientific priority of the last two Decadal Surveys of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. The surveys are exhaustive reports written by dozens of scientists over many months, designed to help NASA chart its agenda in 10-year increments.

There are compelling reasons to bring samples back from Mars.

The technologies required for retrieving soil and rocks from Mars will underpin those needed for NASA's Moon to Mars initiative, a grand plan to eventually send humans to Mars and bring them safely home. And successfully retrieving study samples from Mars would reaffirm the United States' leadership in robotic space exploration at a time when China is eyeing that very same prize.

The samples have the potential to revolutionize our understanding of the Red Planet's geological history and whether it might ever have hosted life. They will offer vital information about the environment Mars astronauts would encounter, and they will give us brand-new insight into the processes that shape planets generally. Just as scientists have done with 50-year-old Apollo moon samples, what is collected now can be studied for decades to come, making use of analytical capabilities yet to be invented and representing a scientific gift that keeps on giving.

The first phase of Mars Sample Return has already begun. In February 2021, the rover Perseverance landed on Mars tasked with collecting air, rock cores and soil that would ultimately be returned to Earth. Equipped with a sophisticated sampling system, Perseverance has already filled 23 of its collection tubes and has 15 more.

The envisioned next phase is sending a Sample Retrieval Lander to rendezvous with Perseverance, transferring the samples and then launching them into space, to be picked up by an Earth Return Orbiter furnished by ESA.

Yet how, when, or even if those next phases will happen

is far from certain.

Faced with rising costs, NASA commissioned an independent review of the entire program in 2023. The review didn't pull punches, finding that the likely cost of the project had ballooned, its organizational structure wasn't working, and that NASA hadn't effectively communicated to the science community or the public why the massive effort was worthwhile in the first place. Despite that, the review emphasized that the scientific and geopolitical value of Mars Sample Return couldn't be overstated, and that the project could be made affordable.

Still, the Senate threatened to reduce the project's budget substantially and even cancel it outright, which starkly contrasted with the House's proposal to support the program fully. Congress now proposes to fund it at some level, but this uncertainty has driven NASA to "ramp back" its Mars Sample Return-related activities. As a result, Pasadena's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, NASA's lead center for the project, laid off more than 600 staff members last month—highly skilled expertise that NASA can no longer access.

Now Congress has a choice: It can turn its back on Mars Sample Return or commit to funding the boldest robotic planetary science effort humanity has yet undertaken.

The sample project must be put on a financially affordable path as part of NASA's overall program of U.S. planetary exploration—returning samples from Mars cannot happen at the expense of every other planetary science enterprise at the agency. A team began developing a cost-effective path forward last year, in response to the independent review's criticisms. Its proposals are expected later in March.

But even a streamlined and fiscally sound project of the scale and payoff of the Mars Sample Return will require more money than previous planetary missions. That's the nature of doing something that's never been done before.

And let's be clear: Abandoning the project would not only sacrifice work already underway, it would be a major blow to the Decadal Survey process, hurting not just planetary science but the other science communities that have relied on the survey process for establishing scientific and funding priorities going as far back as the 1960s.

Congress should sufficiently fund NASA to realize the generational goal of returning to Earth samples from Mars. For a fraction of the country's annual non-defense discretionary spending—or about 5% of what Americans spend on pizza each year—the United States can set its sights on the Red Planet like never before. In doing so, we can answer fundamental questions of planetary science, bolster our relationships with our international partners and inspire the next generation of explorers.

Mars Sample Return is hard, but that isn't its problem. For NASA, and for the United States, it's perhaps the single best reason to do it.

Paul Byrne is an associate professor of earth, environmental and planetary science at Washington University in St. Louis. Vicky Hamilton is an institute scientist at Southwest Research Institute in Boulder, Colorado. Both have dealings with NASA but are not directly employed by the agency.

WE

From page 8

We saw the pitiful results of this last month when a comprehensive border-security bill failed to proceed even to a debate in the U.S. Senate. House Speaker Mike Johnson already had declared the measure dead on arrival in his chamber.

Why? Donald Trump, then well on his way to becoming what he is now—the presumptive presidential nominee of the Republican Party—ordered his supporters in Congress to kill the measure, which President Joe Biden had said he would support.

That legislation would have given the executive branch more legal tools. That, in turn, could have helped bolster public confidence that the U.S. government can better control who enters this country and ensure existing laws are enforced.

Increased public confidence is necessary to transform immigration from something scary and negative to what it should be—a critical part of keeping this improbable economic expansion going, even in the face of inflation and high interest rates.

It's not just in the halls of Congress where the words of Moynihan and other business leaders ought to be better appreciated. Those in City Hall should do so as well. We thought about this as we digested the depressing but unsurprising news that Cook County's population fell by an estimated 24,000 in 2023, according to new U.S. Census Bureau estimates—and that was despite tens of thousands of migrant arrivals.

The migrant surge in Chicago—a product mainly of Texas Gov. Greg Abbott's cynical but highly effective desire to score political points at our expense—has largely been viewed as a negative for our city. A crisis that strained resources.

For our more diplomatic voices, it has been an unwelcome distraction. For our most xenophobic and myopic, it has been an invasion of undesirable outsiders.

That it's been a crisis no one can dispute. Buses transporting mostly impoverished people from other countries, many of whom don't speak English, at times and to places that are unpredictable is costly and challenging to manage. Our local leadership has more than struggled to do so. And it's understandable that some longtime Chicagoans worry about the impact on their own kids in school and/or feel that resources have been diverted away from their own, very real needs. We'd also note that most countries pay more attention to immigrants' skill levels, insuring an influx of people who can do the jobs America needs doing the most.

But when the dust settles and we move on to other crises—that could be well into the future, we acknowledge—it is our hope that this parade of asylum-seeking newcomers to Chicago will be viewed as an influx of productive residents and an economic shot in the arm for a metro area that needs it more than most. Perhaps those who have come here under these less than ideal conditions and yet decide to stay and make a life for themselves will be able ultimately to testify to what a great city and region this has been for them.

Brian Moynihan got us thinking about taking the longer view: More workers. More cultural contributions. More taxpayers, sharing our burdens.

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Celebrating a trinity of taotao Tinian Patricks

LITERARY NOOK

By JOEY 'PEPE BATBON' CONNOLLY

Special to the Saipan Tribune

Joey aka "Pepe Batbon" Connolly is a retired educator who taught in the CNMI, NOLA, and LVNV. Joey is the Poet Laureate of Tinian, celebrating 40 years in the CNMI.



I'd like to give a shoutout to three of my former students named Patrick who have served and continue to serve the CNMI public: Patrick H. San Nicolas, current member of CNMI House of Representatives; Joey Patrick San Nicolas, former attorney general and mayor of Tinian; and Patrick A. Manglona, a U.S. military veteran and former member of the Tinian Municipal Council. I'm very proud of them and all their respective families.

The word "duendes" is used in Spanish and Chamorro languages. English speakers use the Irish Gaelic word "lepre-






chaun," which has the same meaning. A "shanachie" is a teller of old tales and legends. "May the best day of your past be the worst day of your future" is an old Irish blessing.

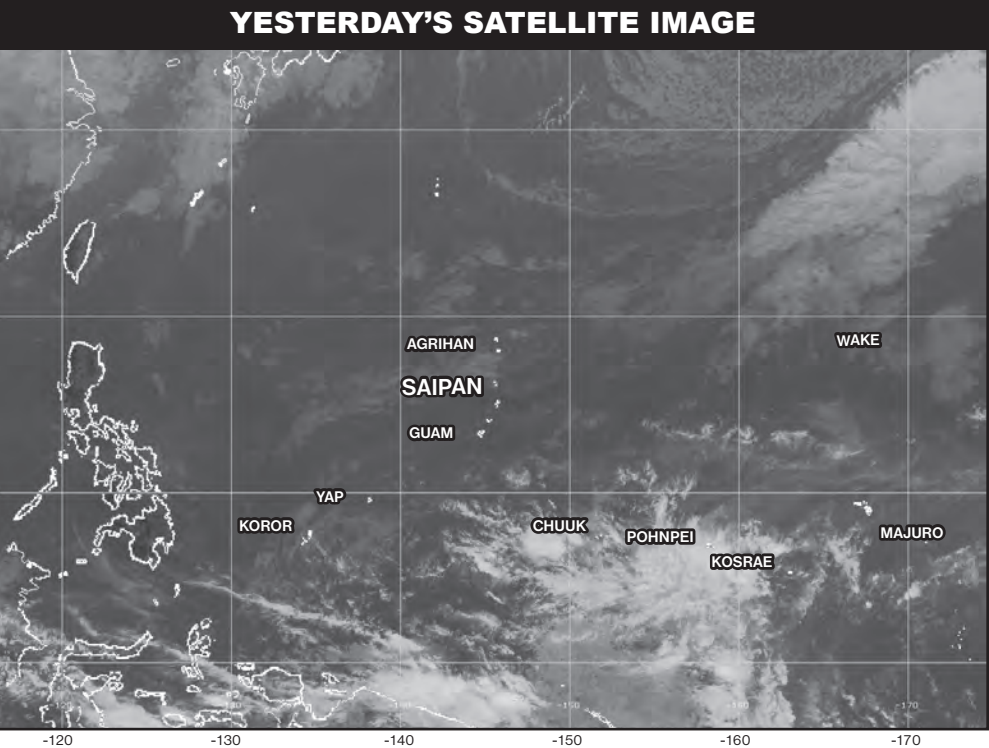
Happy St. Patrick's Day to *todu taotao* CNMI. Si Pepe.

Duendes Dance from Dublin to Dandan

Leprechauns are loose all over the place
From the Marianas Trench to outer space
From downtown Agana to Adelup duendes
dance a fairy loop, leprechauns know the scoop
on Luta from Wedding Cake Mountain to
Sinapalu guaha binada an man dana tod
From Tinian's Magpo Heights to Marpo Valley
guaha katdon pika yan bula donne sali
From Saipan villages Gualo Rai to Garapan
plenty kim chi, bifstek and stir fry in the pan
from Susupe's long beach over to San Vicente
adobo and tinola you will find more than plenty
on Naftan Rock sits Joey Pepe Batbon Connolly
a fat old duendes/leprechaun shanachie wannabe.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		TUESDAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY	
									
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.		Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.		Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.		Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.	
84	75°	84	75°	87	75°	87	75°	87	75°



PICTURE TIME: 7:07 AM SUNDAY, MARCH 17, 2024

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Gentle to moderate trades prevail. Satellite imagery indicates some dissipating clouds over the waters. Tanapag buoy shows seas are between 7 and 8 feet.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: <https://www.weather.gov/gum/>

MICRONESIA			▲▼°F
Guam and Rota	Mostly Cloudy	88° / 79°	
Palau	Showers	86° / 79°	
Yap	Mostly Cloudy	88° / 78°	
Chuuk	Mostly Cloudy	90° / 79°	
Pohnpei	Rain Shower	86° / 78°	
Kosrae	Mostly Cloudy	86° / 79°	
Majuro	Mostly Cloudy	86° / 82°	

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:22 AM	6:27 PM
Tuesday	6:21 AM	6:27 PM
Wednesday	6:21 AM	6:27 PM
Thursday	6:20 AM	6:28 PM
Friday	6:19 AM	6:28 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	1:21 AM	12:39 PM
Tuesday	-	2:14 AM	1:35 PM
Wednesday	-	3:03 AM	2:29 PM
Thursday	-	3:46 AM	3:21 PM
Friday	-	4:26 AM	4:10 PM

AROUND THE GLOBE			▲▼°F
Auckland	Fair	69° / 51°	
Beijing	Fair	69° / 41°	
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	74° / 67°	
Honolulu	Showers	79° / 71°	
London	Partly Cloudy	57° / 46°	
Los Angeles	Showers	60° / 48°	
Manila	Mostly Sunny	91° / 77°	
Melbourne	Mostly Cloudy	82° / 66°	
Miami	Partly Cloudy	79° / 72°	
New York	Clear	58° / 47°	
Osaka	Showers	66° / 51°	
Paris	Partly Cloudy	64° / 45°	
Busan	Partly Cloudy	67° / 54°	
Rome	Mostly Sunny	66° / 45°	
Salem	Cloudy	78° / 60°	
San Francisco	Showers	54° / 44°	
Seoul	Fair	64° / 47°	
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	69° / 51°	
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	65° / 48°	

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY			FEET
4:16 AM	High Tide	1.54	
9:04 AM	Low Tide	1.28	
1:00 PM	High Tide	1.49	
9:19 PM	Low Tide	-0.01	

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MARCH 1, 2024

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA076	9:50AM	10:35AM	Daily	UA174	8:00AM	8:45AM	Daily
SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)				NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN			
UA824	7:05AM	9:45AM	1, 3, 5	UA825	9:25PM	2:00AM+1	2, 4, 7
GUAM-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-GUAM			
PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	Daily	UA189	00:40AM	6:30AM	3, 6
UA193	7:50PM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Palau	PR110	10:05PM	3:55AM+1	Daily
UA183	7:55PM	9:50PM	Daily	UA192	10:40PM	6:30AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
				UA184	10:55PM	4:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
7C3403/2305	4:40AM	10:20PM	Daily	UA189/174	00:40AM	8:45AM+1	3, 6 via Guam
UA076/183	9:50AM	9:50PM	Daily via Guam	UA192/174	10:40PM	8:45AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
UA076/193	9:50AM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau	UA184/174	10:55PM	8:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via Guam
				7C2306/3406	11:15PM	3:30PM+1	Daily
SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)				INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN			
TW308	2:15AM	6:10AM	Daily	7C3462	08:00AM	1:30PM	Daily Feb 7-16 only
7C3403	4:40AM	8:35AM	Daily	7C3406	10:10AM	3:30PM	Daily
7C3405	4:35PM	8:25PM	Daily	TW307	7:45PM	1:15AM+1	Daily
				7C3404	10:15PM	3:35AM+1	Daily

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 2, 2024

SAIPAN TO ROTA					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	SAIPAN	ROTA	08:30	09:00	Daily
1302	SAIPAN	ROTA	10:30	11:00	Daily
1303	SAIPAN	ROTA	15:30	16:00	Daily
ROTA TO SAIPAN					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	ROTA	SAIPAN	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	ROTA	SAIPAN	11:30	12:00	Saturday & Sunday
3103	ROTA	SAIPAN	13:30	14:00	Monday To Friday
3104	ROTA	SAIPAN	16:30	17:00	Daily
ROTA TO GUAM					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	ROTA	GUAM	11:30	12:00	Monday To Friday
GUAM TO ROTA					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	GUAM	ROTA	12:30	13:00	Monday To Friday
SAIPAN TO TINIAN					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1201	SAIPAN	TINIAN	7:30	7:45	Daily
1202	SAIPAN	TINIAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	SAIPAN	TINIAN	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	SAIPAN	TINIAN	10:00	10:15	Daily
1206	SAIPAN	TINIAN	14:00	14:15	Daily
1207	SAIPAN	TINIAN	15:00	15:15	Daily
1208	SAIPAN	TINIAN	16:00	16:15	Daily
1209	SAIPAN	TINIAN	17:00	17:15	Daily
TINIAN TO SAIPAN					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2101	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
2102	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	TINIAN	SAIPAN	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	TINIAN	SAIPAN	10:30	10:45	Daily
2106	TINIAN	SAIPAN	14:30	14:45	Daily
2107	TINIAN	SAIPAN	15:30	15:45	Daily
2108	TINIAN	SAIPAN	16:30	16:45	Daily
2109	TINIAN	SAIPAN	17:30	17:45	Daily

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Business

Meet Sandy, the newest member of the PIC family

TUMON, Guam—There's a new huggable, feathery friend at the Pacific Islands Club. The resort welcomed its newest mascot, Sandy, who hatched in time for spring! Sandy, a *Sihek* or Guam Kingfisher, is the newest member of the PIC family and is sister to the world-famous Siheky, who has been bringing smiles to PIC guests since 2002.

"Our PIC family is growing! Much like our goal of introducing Siheky as a learning and interactive experience at PIC, Sandy's debut will help to enhance the overall PIC guest experience by adding a sense of diversity and family fun," said Ben Ferguson, general manager of PIC Guam.

PIC welcomed the addition of Sandy to better promote inclusion, cultural diversity, and preservation as part of its brand expansion to appeal to a larger audience while also honoring rich cultural heritage and unique wildlife. PIC is known as a family-friendly



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Sandy, a *Sihek* or Guam Kingfisher, is the newest member of the Pacific Islands Club family and is sister to the world-famous Siheky.

resort and tropical playground for kids of all ages. Together, the brother-sister duo will offer guests opportunities to learn more about the *Sihek* bird and the importance of close familial bonds.

Ferguson added, "Having Siheky and Sandy together at PIC further reinforces our goal of being the ideal vacation destination for families with children and where friendships and memories can be made. We

believe that Sandy will be right at home here at PIC. We're excited to announce that many fun adventures await our guests."

PIC introduced its Siheky mascot as part of its commitment to promote awareness of the nearly extinct Kingfisher and support conservation efforts to protect region's unique ecosystem.

Sandy is known for her gentle and caring nature, especially toward her brother and PIC family. As Siheky's sister, she has the same traits of friendliness and curiosity with an innate sense of adventure. Her unique personality is a perfect mix of playfulness, curiosity, and mischief, which promises guests new and exciting experiences at PIC.

Guests staying at PIC Guam will have plenty of opportunities to engage with Sandy and Siheky with daily meetups at 9am in the lower lobby, and additional sessions at 3:30pm and 5pm in the main lobby. As an

extra dose of excitement, Sandy and Siheky will also have daily meetups at PIC Saipan. Sandy and Siheky also participate throughout the resorts' interactive kids' programs—the PIC Kids Club, Fun Card program, and Let's Speak English program. Guests are also welcome to swing by Sandy's Yum Yum Shack for an array of delectable treats including taiyaki, takoyaki, and other mouthwatering delights available at PIC Guam. With Sandy's arrival, PIC is offering special promotions for the month of March and in honor of Mes Chamoru. Please visit picresorts.com or call (671) 646- 9171 or (670) 234-7976 for more information or to book your next vacation.

About Pacific Islands Club

Pacific Islands Club is the largest and most family-

friendly beachfront resort on Guam and Saipan.

Located along Tumon Bay, PIC Guam, opened in 1980 and includes 777 guestrooms, seven food and beverage outlets, captivating family entertainment by the Super American Circus, a swim-thru aquarium, a dynamic kids' program, and a 10-acre waterpark.

Situated at the southern side of San Antonio, PIC Saipan, opened in 1989 and includes 308 guestrooms, six food and beverage outlets, a robust kids' program, and a spectacular waterpark featuring a 500-meter-long lazy river, an impressive Point Break artificial surfing facility, giant water slides, and various other pools.

PIC is operated by P.H.R. Ken Micronesia, Inc. For more information, visit picresorts.com or call (671) 646-9171 or (670) 234-7976. (PR)



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Sandy joins brother Siheky to bring joy and promote fun for kids of all ages at Guam and Saipan's most family-friendly resort.

Bernie Sanders wants US to adopt a 32-hour workweek

The 40-hour workweek has been standard in the U.S. for more than eight decades. Now some members of Congress want to give hourly workers an extra day off.

Sen. Bernie Sanders, the far-left independent from Vermont, this week introduced a bill that would shorten to 32 hours the amount of time many Americans can work each week before they're owed overtime.

Given advances in automation, robotics and artificial intelligence, Sanders says U.S. companies can afford to give employees more time off without cutting their pay and benefits.

Critics say a mandated shorter week would force many companies to hire additional workers or lose productivity.

Here's what to know about the issue:

What would Sanders' proposal do?

The bill Sanders introduced Wednesday in the Senate would reduce the standard workweek from 40 hours to 32 hours. Employers would be prohibited from reducing their workers' pay and benefits to match their lost hours.

That means people who currently work Monday through Friday, eight hours per day, would get to add an extra day to their weekend. Workers eligible for overtime would get paid extra for exceeding 32 hours in a week.

Sanders says the worktime reductions would be phased in over four years. He held a hearing on the proposal Thurs-

day in the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, of which Sanders is the chairman.

How would a shorter workweek affect employees and productivity?

One recent study of British companies that agreed to adopt a 32-hour workweek concluded that employees came to work less stressed and more focused while revenues remained steady or increased.

In 2022, a team of university researchers and the nonprofit 4 Day Week Global enlisted 61 companies to reduce working hours for six months without cutting wages. Afterward, 71% of the 2,900 workers said they were less burned out and nearly half reported being more satisfied with their jobs.

Meanwhile, 24 of the participating companies reported revenue growth of more than 34% over the prior six months. Nearly two dozen others saw a smaller increase.

"The majority of employees register an increase in their productivity over the trial. They are more energized, focused and capable," Juliet Shor, a Boston College sociology professor and a lead researcher on the UK study, told Sanders' Senate committee.

Critics say a 32-hour workweek might work for companies where employees spend most of their time at computers or in meetings, but could be disastrous for production at manufacturing plants that need hands-on workers to keep assembly lines running. (AP)

TikTok creators warn of economic impact if app sees ban

Alex Pearlman shut the door on dreams of a standup comedy career almost a decade ago, pivoting from the stage to an office cubicle where he worked a customer service job.

Then he started posting random jokes and commentary about pop culture and politics on TikTok. Just over 2.5 million followers later, he quit his nine-to-five and recently booked his first nationwide tour.

Pearlman is among the many TikTok creators across the U.S. outraged over a bipartisan bill passed by the House of Representatives on Wednesday that would lead to a nationwide ban of the popular video app if its China-based owner, Byte-

Dance, doesn't sell its stake. The bill still needs to go through the Senate, where its prospects are unclear.

Content creators say a ban would hurt countless people and businesses that rely on TikTok for a significant portion of their income, while also arguing TikTok has become an unrivaled platform for dialogue and community.

Pearlman, who lives outside Philadelphia, said TikTok has transformed his life, allowing him to live a dream, provide for his family and spend the first three months of his newborn son's life at home. His customer service job only offered paternity leave equivalent to three weeks off, with two weeks paid.

"I don't take a day for granted on this app, because it's been so shocking," said Pearlman, 39. "In reality, TikTok has been the driver of American social media for the last four years. Something will step into that place if TikTok vanishes tomorrow. Whether or not that will be better or worse, Congress has no way of knowing."

TikTok, which launched in 2016, has skyrocketed in popularity, growing faster than Instagram, YouTube or Facebook. The push to remove the app from Chinese authority follows concerns from lawmakers, law enforcement and intelligence officials about the insecurity of user data, potential suppression of content unfavorable to the Chinese government

and the possibility that the platform could boost pro-Beijing propaganda, all of which TikTok denies.

To date, the U.S. government hasn't provided any evidence showing TikTok shared U.S. user data with Chinese authorities.

The move comes as the pandemic saw huge growth in digital marketing as people were stuck at home consuming—and creating—content at levels not seen before.

Jensen Savannah, a 29-year-old from Charlotte, began making TikToks of her travels around the Carolinas during the pandemic. Now a full-time influencer, she has tripled her income since leaving her telecommunications sales job. (AP)

Nation

Biden backs Schumer after senator calls for new elections in Israel

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Joe Biden expressed support Friday for Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer after the senator called for new elections in Israel, the latest sign that the U.S. relationship with its closest Middle East ally is careening toward fracture over the war in Gaza.

Schumer, a Jewish Democrat from New York, sent tremors through both countries this week when he said Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has “lost his way” and warned that “Israel cannot survive if it becomes a pariah” as the Palestinian death toll continues to grow.

“He made a good speech,” Biden said in the Oval Office during a meeting with Ireland’s prime minister. “I think he expressed serious concerns shared not only by him but by many Americans.”

The Democratic president did not repeat Schumer’s appeal for Israel to hold elections, a step that would likely end Netanyahu’s tenure because of mounting discontent with his leadership. But Biden’s comments reflect his own frustration with an Israeli prime minister who has hindered efforts to expand humanitarian assistance in Gaza and opposed the creation of an independent Palestinian state.



President Joe Biden meets with Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar in the Oval Office of the White House, Friday, March 15, 2024 in Washington.

The latest point of friction has been Israel’s goal of pursuing Hamas into Rafah, a city in southern Gaza where 1.4 million displaced Palestinians have fled to avoid fighting in the north. Netanyahu’s office said Friday that it approved a military operation that would involve evacuating civilians, but U.S. officials are concerned

about the potential for a new wave of bloodshed.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, speaking from Vienna, said, “We have to see a clear and implementable plan” to safeguard innocent people from an Israeli incursion.

“We have not seen such a plan,” he said.

However, Blinken said tough

conversations between Israeli and American leaders do not mean the alliance is fraying.

“That’s actually the strength of the relationship, to be able to speak clearly, candidly and directly,” he said.

It’s possible that an attack on Rafah could be avoided.

Negotiations over a cease-fire and the release of hostages are underway in Qatar, where Netanyahu agreed to send a delegation to continue talks.

White House national security spokesman John Kirby said the U.S. would not have its own team at the negotiations but will

remain engaged in the process.

He also said it’s “up to the Israeli people to decide” whether there should be elections. Asked about why Biden praised Schumer’s speech, Kirby said the president appreciated the senator’s “passion.”

Biden’s rhetoric on the war has evolved since the conflict began on Oct. 7, when Hamas killed 1,200 Israelis in a surprise attack. The president immediately embraced Netanyahu and Israel while also warning against being “consumed” by rage.

Since then, Israel has killed more than 30,000 Palestinians in Gaza. And while Biden continues to back Israel’s right to defend itself, he’s increased his criticisms of Netanyahu.

After his State of the Union speech earlier this month, Biden said that he needed to have a “come to Jesus” conversation with Netanyahu. He also accused Netanyahu of “hurting Israel more than helping Israel” with his leadership of the war.

Biden is trying to navigate between a Republican Party with an “Israel right or wrong” mindset and a deeply divided Democratic Party, said Aaron David Miller, who has advised administrations from both parties on the Middle East.

How Texas’ plans to arrest migrants for illegal entry would work if it is allowed to take effect

MCALLEN, Texas (AP)—Texas’ plan to arrest migrants who cross the U.S.-Mexico border illegally is on hold while the Supreme Court considers a challenge to Republican Gov. Greg Abbott’s latest move over immigration.

The nation’s highest court put the law on pause over a lawsuit led by the Justice Department, which argues that Texas is overstepping the federal government’s immigration authority. Under the law, any police officer in Texas could arrest migrants for illegal entry and a judge could order them to leave the U.S.

Justice Samuel Alito has ordered a stay until Monday at 5 p.m. EDT, when the law could potentially take effect.

A federal judge in Texas had blocked the law in a sweeping rejection last month, calling it a violation of the Supremacy Clause of the U.S. Constitution. Texas swiftly appealed the ruling and argued that it has a right to take action over what Abbott has described as an “invasion” of migrants on the border.

Here’s what to know:

The law Abbott signed in December allows any Texas law enforcement officer to arrest people suspected of entering the country illegally. Once in custody, migrants could either agree to a Texas judge’s order to leave the U.S. or be prosecuted on misdemeanor charges of illegal entry. Migrants who don’t leave could face arrest again under more serious felony charges.

Arresting officers must have probable cause, which could include witnessing the illegal entry themselves or seeing it on video.

The law cannot be enforced against people lawfully present in the U.S., including those who were granted asylum or who are enrolled in the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program.

Critics, including Mexico President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, have said the law could lead to racial profiling and family separation. American Civil Liberties Union affiliates in Texas and some neighboring states issued a travel advisory warning of a possible threat to

civil and constitutional rights when passing through Texas.

Abbott has rejected concerns over profiling. While signing the bill, he said troopers and National Guard members at the border can see migrants crossing illegally “with their own eyes.”

The law can be enforced in any of Texas’ 254 counties, including those hundreds of miles from the border.

But Republican state Rep. David Spiller, the author of the law, has said he expects the vast majority of arrests will occur within 50 miles (80 kilometers) of the U.S.-Mexico border. Texas’ state police chief has expressed similar expectations.

Some places are off-limits. Arrests cannot be made in public and private schools; places of worship; or hospitals and other health care facilities, including those where sexual assault forensic examinations are conducted.

Under the law, migrants ordered to leave would be sent to ports of entry along the U.S.-Mexico border, even if they are not Mexican citizens.

ACROSS THE NATION

Long recovery ahead for some in path of deadly tornadoes in central US

LAKEVIEW, Ohio (AP)—Residents in a swath of the central U.S. hit by deadly tornadoes were cleaning up, assessing damage and helping neighbors on Saturday. But it will be a long recovery from the storms that ripped through parts of Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana and Arkansas. Thursday night’s storms claimed three lives in the Indian Lake area of Ohio’s Logan County, one of the hardest-hit regions, and about 40 people were injured and dozens of homes damaged in one Indiana community. Tornadoes were also reported in Illinois and Missouri. Samantha Snipes, 33, said that when she first heard the tornado warning, she called her father who lives seven minutes away and told him to take cover. He said he was trying to by getting into the closet in her childhood home and then the phone cut out, she told The Associated Press.

She and her husband tried to drive down the main road to get to him but couldn’t do so. They were able to get through the back way after the tornado passed. “It looked like out of a movie, like ‘Twister’ “ she said. “My dad’s garage was leveled. The back of his house is

gone. Like everything’s gone.” They climbed over everything screaming for him. When they found him, he wasn’t injured and he told them to stop crying, she said. Her father, Joe Baker, had always told his children to hide in the closet if there was ever a tornado. “We grew up here. Like this is our childhood home,” said Snipes who Saturday was throwing away things and figuring out what could be saved. “And you see it on the news. But you never imagine it’s going to happen to you.”

Man suspected of killing 3 people in Philadelphia area arrested in New Jersey, police say

TRENTON, N.J. (AP)—A man suspected of fatally shooting three family members in their Philadelphia-area homes Saturday was arrested in New Jersey after evading law enforcement for hours as police mobilized across two states, shutting down a parade and an amusement park and ordering some residents to stay in their homes. Steve Wilson, police director for the city of Trenton, New Jersey, said the man was arrested near a house where officers had believed he was barricaded inside. He apparently left the home before the police cordon was erected, Wilson said.

Wilson added that he did not believe the suspect was armed at the time. The suspect was identified earlier as 26-year-old Andre Gordon Jr. Authorities said they believe he killed his stepmother, his teenage sister and the mother of his children in shootings at two homes in eastern Pennsylvania’s Falls Township in the morning, Bucks County District Attorney Jennifer Schorn said.

Man, woman arrested in connection to dead baby found in Florida trash bin

HOLLYWOOD, Fla. (AP)—A woman believed to be the mother of an infant found dead in a trash bin earlier this year has been arrested, along with a man who police said helped her dispose of the body outside a South Florida apartment complex. They are both charged with failure to report a death, and the man is also charged with illegal disposal of a body, Hollywood police said Friday night. The full-term baby boy, with an umbilical cord still attached, was found on Jan. 7 by a roofing company worker who had noticed a foul odor. He found the baby in a reusable shopping bag inside the trash bin, and notified authorities, according to a police affidavit.

World

US, G-7 allies warn Iran to back off deal to provide Russia ballistic missiles

WASHINGTON (AP)—The United States and allies warned Iran on Friday that major Western economies will pile new sanctions on Tehran if it moves forward with an advancing plan to provide ballistic missiles to Russia for its war with Ukraine.

The Biden administration has raised alarms for months that Russia is seeking close-range ballistic missiles from Iran as Moscow struggles to replenish its dwindling supplies.

The U.S. has yet to confirm that missiles have moved from Iran to Russia. But U.S. officials are alarmed by comments by Iranian officials that suggest that a deal is imminent.

One action that the Group of Seven countries are mulling is to prohibit Iran Air, the country's national air carrier, from flying to Europe, according to

a senior Biden administration official. The official, who was not authorized to comment and insisted on anonymity, declined to preview other sanctions that the U.S. is mulling beyond describing the potential action as "significant measures."

"Were Iran to proceed with providing ballistic missiles or related technology to Russia, we are prepared to respond swiftly and in a coordinated manner including with new and significant measures against Iran," the G-7 leaders said in a statement.

Iran's U.N. Mission said last month that there are no legal restrictions to prevent it from making ballistic missile sales but that is "morally obligated to refrain from weapon transactions during the Russia-Ukraine conflict to prevent fueling the war."

The U.S. and Europe already impose extensive sanctions against Iran targeting individuals as well as limiting the country's access to trade, financial services, energy, technology and other sectors. The sanctions on Iran are arguably the most extensive and comprehensive set of sanctions that the United States maintains on any country, with thousands of individuals and entities targeted.

The Democratic administra-

tion in January said that U.S. intelligence officials had determined a Russian-Iran deal had not been completed but that they were concerned that Russia's negotiations to acquire missiles from Iran were actively advancing.

In September, according to the White House, Iran hosted Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu to show off a range of ballistic missile systems—a moment that

sparked U.S. concern that a deal could come together.

Asked why the deal hasn't already been consummated, White House national security spokesman John Kirby said he could not "speak for the mullahs."

Iran last year completed a deal to buy Su-35 fighter jets from Russia and has been looking to buy additional advanced military equipment from the country, including attack he-

licopters, radars and combat-trainer aircraft, according to the White House.

The U.S. and other countries have taken steps aimed at thwarting the supply, sale or transfer involving Iran and ballistic missile-related items, including issuing guidance to private companies about Iranian missile procurement practices to make sure they aren't inadvertently supporting Iran's development efforts.

With Navalny gone, allies keep up fight to undermine Putin's grip on power

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WORLD BRIEFS

Russian missiles kill at least 16 people in the latest strike on southern Ukraine's Odesa

KYIV, Ukraine (AP)—A Russian ballistic missile attack blasted homes in the southern Ukrainian city of Odesa on Friday, followed by a second missile that targeted first responders who arrived at the scene, officials said. At least 16 people were killed.

The attack occurred as Russians began voting in a presidential election that is all but certain to extend Vladimir Putin's rule by another six years after he crushed dissent, and as the war in Ukraine stretches into its third year. The dead included a paramedic and an emergency service worker. At least 53 other people were wounded by the Iskander-M missiles, officials said. At least 10 houses in Odesa and some emergency service equipment were damaged in the strike, which started a blaze, according to emergency officials and regional Gov. Oleh Kiper.

The tactic of firing a second missile at the same location, aiming to hit rescuers, is known in military terms as a double tap. Such strikes often hit civilians.

A suspected attack by Yemen's Houthi rebels has targeted a ship in the Gulf of Aden

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP)—A suspected attack by Yemen's Houthi rebels saw an explosive detonate near a ship early Sunday in the Gulf of Aden, potentially marking their latest assault on shipping through the crucial waterway leading to the Red Sea. The British military's United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations center said the vessel's crew saw the blast as it passed off the coast of

Aden, the port city in southern Yemen home to the country's exiled government. "No damage to the vessel has been reported and the crew are reported safe," UKMTO said. The Houthis have launched repeated drone and missile attacks in the same area, disrupting energy and cargo shipments through the Gulf of Aden. The rebels did not immediately claim responsibility for the attack, though it typically takes the Houthis several hours before acknowledging their assaults.

Cease-fire talks with Israel and Hamas are expected to resume on Sunday in Qatar

CAIRO (AP)—Stalled talks aimed at securing a cease-fire in the Israel-Hamas war are expected to resume in earnest in Qatar as soon as Sunday, according to Egyptian officials. The talks would mark the first time both Israeli officials and Hamas leaders join the indirect negotiations since the start of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. International mediators had hoped to secure a six-week truce before Ramadan started earlier this week, but Hamas refused any deal that wouldn't lead to a permanent cease-fire in Gaza, a demand Israel rejected. But both sides have made moves in recent days aimed at getting the talks, which never fully broke off, back on track. Hamas gave mediators a new proposal for a three-stage plan that would end the fighting, according to two Egyptian officials, one who is involved in the talks and a second who was briefed on them. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to reveal the contents of the sensitive discussions.

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Health & Wellness

How to stay healthy in changing weather conditions

By DEB BALZER
Mayo Clinic News Network

The weather can be unpredictable, especially in late winter. One day it might be sunny and warm, the next day it might be freezing and snowy. How does this changing weather affect your health and well-being? And what can you do to protect yourself from getting sick?

Dr. Tejal Shelat, a Mayo Clinic family medicine resident, says fluctuations in temperature can cause the body temperature to vary as well.

Changes in body temperature and exposure to seasonal viruses make you more susceptible to catching illnesses such as the common cold and flu.

Symptoms of respiratory infections

Dr. Shelat says that these viruses can cause upper respiratory infections, which are characterized by several symptoms:

- Runny nose
- Postnasal drip
- Fevers greater than 100.4 F
- Shortness of breath
- Persistent productive cough

Chest pain when taking in a deep breath may indicate a more serious infection, such as pneumonia.

To prevent or treat these



infections, Dr. Shelat recommends boosting your immune system with some simple strategies. The first is to consume enough vitamin C, which is a powerful antioxidant that can help fight off infections.

Strategies to stay healthy in changing weather

■ Consume enough vitamin C from fruits or supplements to boost your immune system.

■ Exercise regularly, at least 30 minutes a day, five days a week, to improve your blood circulation and

cellular function.

■ Seek medical attention if you have a fever above 100.4 F or any severe or persistent symptoms.

"Fruits that are rich in vitamin C, like lemons and oranges, just having one a day or squeezing a few slices of lemon into your water bottle, that might go a long way in protecting your immune system," Dr. Shelat says. She adds that some people may prefer to take vitamin C and zinc tablets, but a healthy diet that includes fruits and vegetables is more than adequate.

Another strategy is to exer-

cise regularly, which can improve your blood circulation, oxygen delivery and cellular function. Dr. Shelat says that exercise does not have to be strenuous or time-consuming.

"It could be just a 30-minute walk most days of the week. That gets you to 150 minutes (about 2.5 hours) a week. And that is a good amount of exercise," she says. She also encourages those who enjoy more intense workouts to continue doing them if they are safe and comfortable.

If you experience any severe or persistent symptoms, seek medical attention as soon as possible.

MAYO CLINIC MINUTE

Managing respiratory illness at home

By DEEDEE STIEPAN
Mayo Clinic News Network

The influenza season may have peaked, but the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says it is far from over. If you or a family member has the flu or other respiratory infection, Dr. Tina Ardon, a Mayo Clinic family medicine physician, says there are ways to manage most respiratory infection symptoms at home.

"Most upper respiratory infections can be managed at home," says Dr. Ardon.

That can start by staying hydrated, which is important part of the body's recovery process.

"If we are feeling sick and we're not drinking enough—maybe we have a high fever or throwing up, we have diarrhea—we are at risk of dehydration. And that may need more urgent evaluation, perhaps in the ER settings," says Dr. Ardon.

Cough is a very common symptom of upper respiratory infections and is usually the last symptom to leave. When it comes to cough, time is the best treatment.

"For the most part, cough will resolve on its own, but some patients may benefit from using things like honey at home as long as you're over the age of 1."

She says if a cough lasts more than two weeks, that's when you should contact your health care team.

The other thing you can do for your body when you're sick can sometimes be the hardest.

"Take the time to rest. That's one way to help your body recover faster," says Dr. Ardon. "I often find people have a hard time turning things off to be able to rest and recover. So that really is probably key for most patients to recover fastest."

Ways to prevent colorectal cancer

ON NUTRITION

BY BARBARA INTERMILL

Tribune News Service

Barbara Intermill is a registered dietitian nutritionist and syndicated columnist. Email her at barbara@quinnessessentialnutrition.com.



We may joke about the prep involved for a colonoscopy (an exam for abnormal changes in the large intestine). But cancers of the colon or rectum are no laughing matter. In fact, when you combine the cancer death rates of men and women, colorectal cancer is now the second deadliest cancer in the United States, according to the American Cancer Society.

Yet this disease is highly preventable, especially when we routinely submit to the screening procedure (which has proven to be much more comfortable than it once was, thank you). Experts say the chances for survival from colorectal cancer are drastically increased if any problems are caught and treated early.

Colorectal cancer is also highly preventable with a few changes in our eating and exercise habits. In 2018, the American Institute for Cancer Research (AICR) published a report that outlined the latest research that links diet, nutrition and physical activity with the development of colorectal cancer.

These recommendations are based on what these experts report as strong and convincing evidence:

Keep your weight as close to a normal weight as possible.



Excess body fat is one of the strongest factors that increases one's risk of colorectal cancer, says the AICR.

Be physically active at least 30 minutes a day or a total of 150 minutes a week. Any type of physical activity, including leisure time, housework or formal exercise, goes a long way to help maintain a healthy weight.

Eat very little, if any, processed meat—that which is smoked, cured, salted or otherwise preserved. This includes favorites like bacon and sausage. Research has shown that the more of these foods we eat, the greater one's risk for colorectal cancer.

If you drink alcohol, limit yourself to no more than 2 drinks a day. What's a "drink"? A 12-ounce can of beer, 5 ounces of wine, or 1.5 ounces of 80-proof distilled spirits. Alcohol use is one of the top three controllable risk factors for cancer, behind smoking and obesity, say these experts.

These recommendations are supported by evidence deemed "probable" but not convincing:

Eat a diet rich in whole grains. While no exact amount is specified, it has been shown that eating these foods may help decrease one's risk for colorectal cancer. How? They contain dietary fiber and other substances with properties that fight off this type of cancer.

Enjoy dairy foods like milk, cheese and yogurt. Studies show that as the intake of these foods goes up, the incidence of colorectal cancer goes down. Experts attribute this to the calcium and other properties in these foods that appear to protect the gut.

Limit your intake of red meat (defined as beef, pork, lamb and goat) to no more than 18 ounces (6 deck-of-cards size servings) per week. Increased risk for colorectal cancer is seen at higher levels.

And of course, eat lots of fiber containing (plant) foods like vegetables, fruits, legumes and lentils. These foods are rich in nutrients and phytochemicals that help fight off the growth of cancer cells.

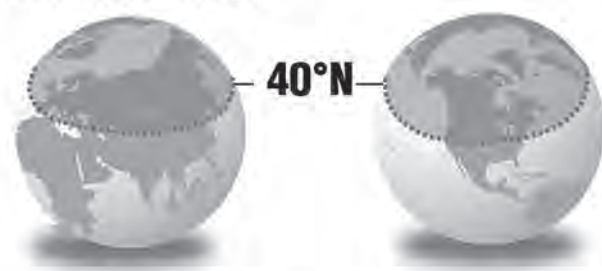
What does this look like in daily meal planning? Check out the AICR's "New American Plate" at www.aicr.org.

Healthy Living

Lacking sunshine

People who live above the 40th parallel north do not get enough vitamin D from sun exposure and need to take supplements and eat enriched food.

The north face



Suggested foods

- Fortified milk and daily products
- Fortified breads and cereals
- Fatty fish, such as salmon and tuna

NOTE: People who stay indoors or regularly use sunscreen may also lack vitamin D

Source: Harvard School of Public Health © 2014 MCT

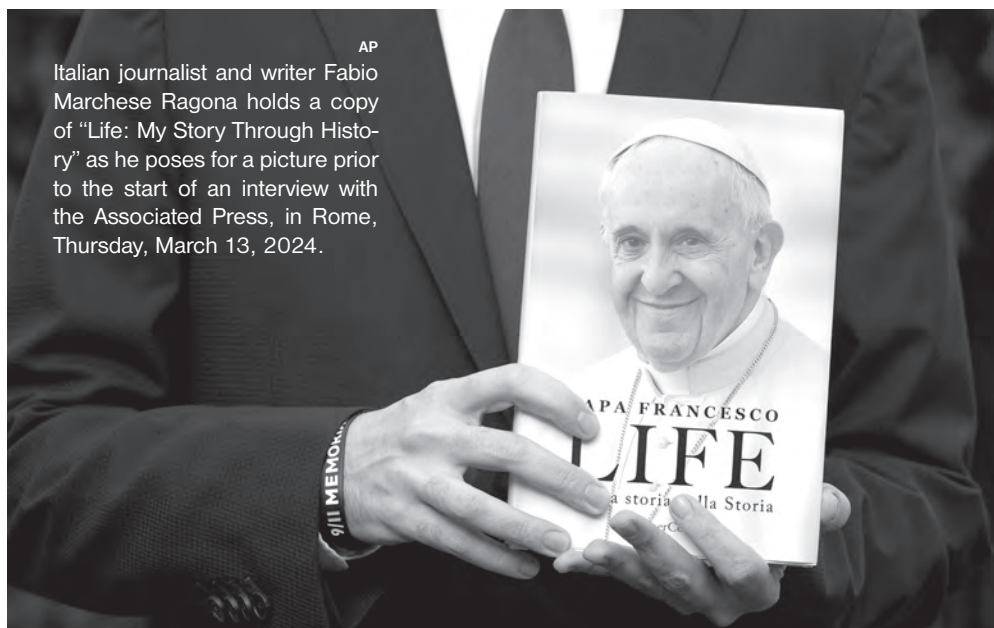
Life & Style

Pope acknowledges health issues but has no plans to retire

VATICAN CITY (AP)—Pope Francis says he has no plans to resign and isn't suffering from any health problems that would require doing so, saying in a new memoir he still has "many projects to bring to fruition."

Francis, 87, made the comments in an autobiography, "Life: My Story Through History," which is being published Tuesday, the 11th anniversary of his installation as pope. Extensive excerpts were published Thursday in the Italian daily Corriere della Sera.

In the memoir, written with Italian journalist Fabio Marchese Ragona, Francis traces key moments of his life and their intersection with world events (World War II, Argentina's military dictatorship and Vatican intrigue) and how they together inform his priorities as pope.



AP
Italian journalist and writer Fabio Marchese Ragona holds a copy of "Life: My Story Through History" as he poses for a picture prior to the start of an interview with the Associated Press, in Rome, Thursday, March 13, 2024.

Significantly, he addresses recurring speculation about his health problems, criticism from conservatives and what

both may mean for the future of his pontificate. Such questions have always surrounded the papacy but the prospect of a papal

resignation only became a reality with the late Pope Benedict XVI's historic 2013 retirement. Francis, who had part of one

lung removed as a young man, has been battling bronchitis, the flu and a cold on and off this winter and for the past two weeks has asked an aide to read most of his speeches. He had a chunk of his large intestine removed in 2021 and was hospitalized twice last year, including once to remove intestinal scar

tissue from previous surgeries to address diverticulosis, or bulges in his intestinal wall.

In his memoir, he stressed that the papacy is a job for life but that "if a serious physical impediment" occurs, he has already penned a letter of resignation that is being held in the Secretariat of State.

Adidas plans to donate \$150M from its sales of Yeezy shoes

LONDON (AP)—Adidas said Wednesday that it's donated or is planning to give away more than \$150 million to groups fighting antisemitism and other forms of hate from the sales of Yeezy shoes last year after it severed ties with Ye, the rapper formerly known as Kanye West.

The German sportswear brand had 1.2 billion euros (\$1.3 billion) worth of popular Yeezy sneakers piled up in warehouses after it broke off its partnership with Ye in October 2022 over his antisemitic and other offensive comments on social media and in interviews.

Adidas decided to sell

some of the remaining shoes in batches, with two releases last year and another that launched late last month, and donate a portion of the proceeds to anti-hate groups.

The company has made donations to the Anti-Defamation League and the Philonise & Keeta Floyd Institute for Social Change, run by social justice advocate Philonise Floyd, the brother of George Floyd.

Net sales of what's left of Adidas' former banner line of sneakers brought in about 750 million euros last year, compared with over 1.2 billion euros in 2022, the company reported.

Cara Delevingne's LA home destroyed in fire

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The Los Angeles home of model and actor Cara Delevingne was destroyed in a fire Friday.

One firefighter was taken to a hospital in fair condition with unspecified injuries, and one unidentified person from the house suffered minor smoke inhalation, Los Angeles Fire Department spokesman Nicholas Prange said.

Delevingne shared several Instagram stories referring to the fire after TMZ reported that the house in the Studio City neighborhood that was

engulfed in flames before dawn belonged to her. Delevingne is currently appearing in a production of "Cabaret" on London's West End and was apparently not at home.

Firefighters arrived at the two-story house to find heavy fire in the rear, which destroyed a room and spread to the attic, Prange said. Once fire crews made certain everyone was out of the house, they took a defensive position and the roof collapsed. It took them more than two hours to put out the flames.

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Dua Lipa, SZA and Shania Twain to lead this year's Glastonbury Festival in June

LONDON (AP)—Whatever the weather, the 200,000 or so music fans heading down to this year's Glastonbury Festival are going to get something different. For the first time since the festival started in 1970, two female acts will be performing the headline spots on the main stage on two of the three nights. British singer Dua Lipa will play the headline spot on the Pyramid Stage on Friday night and American artist SZA will close it out on Sunday. Festival organizers announced Thursday the lineup so far for arguably the world's most famous music festival, which takes place at Worthy Farm in the southwest of England from June 26 to June 30. British rock 'n' roll band Coldplay

will headline the main stage on Saturday, their first appearance since 2016. Coldplay will become the first act to headline Glastonbury five times, one ahead of The Cure.

Alec Baldwin seeks dismissal of grand jury indictment in fatal shooting of cinematographer

SANTA FE, N.M. (AP)—Defense attorneys for Alec Baldwin urged a New Mexico judge on Thursday to dismiss a grand jury indictment against the actor in the fatal shooting of a cinematographer on the set of the Western movie "Rust." The indictment in January charged Baldwin with involuntary manslaughter in the death of cinematographer Halyna Hutchins on Oct. 21, 2021, at a movie ranch on the outskirts of Santa Fe. Baldwin has pleaded

not guilty to the charge. His attorneys in a new court filing accused prosecutors of "unfairly stacking the deck" against Baldwin in grand jury proceedings that diverted attention away from exculpatory evidence and witnesses. They say that prevented the jury from asserting their obligation to hear testimony from director Joel Souza, who was wounded in the shooting while standing near Hutchins, as well as assistant director and safety coordinator Dave Halls and props master Sarah Zachry.

Pierce Brosnan pleads guilty to walking off trail at Yellowstone hot springs, must pay \$1,500

MAMMOTH, Wyo. (AP)—Actor Pierce Brosnan, who pleaded guilty Thursday to stepping off a trail in a ther-

mal area during a November visit to Yellowstone National Park, was caught after posting pictures online, court records said. Brosnan, who called in to the court hearing in Mammoth, Wyoming, was fined \$500 and ordered to make a \$1,000 donation by April 1 to Yellowstone Forever, a non-profit organization that supports the park, court records said. Prosecutors had recommended a \$5,000 fine and a two-year probationary sentence. A second petty offense, for violating closures and use limits, was dismissed by U.S. Magistrate Judge Stephanie Hambrick. The actor issued an apology on his Instagram account Thursday, saying he "made an impulsive mistake" and calling himself an environmentalist with "the utmost respect for and love of our natural world."

Birthday party no-shows come at a cost for host

DEAR ABBY: I recently hosted my husband's birthday. It was a great party. I reserved for 85 people, including the DJ, his assistant, the party planner and her crew. On the day of the event, 20% of the guests who RSVP'd did not show up. One couple said their two daughters had a debut party that night. Another family said their son had an outing. Others had legitimate reasons, like being sick or the house catching fire.

I gave my guests ample time to RSVP. I sent the save-the-date cards four months before, the invitation two months before and the deadline to RSVP two weeks before the event. I even extended the invitation to allow other adults and kids to come to the party. I was too generous. I think it's rude for the families who RSVP for a certain number of people to dismissively not show up because of another event, not considering that each head count means additional cost and planning for the meal, seating chart, etc.

How do I let them know I wish they would have told me ahead of time so I could have removed them and saved myself a few hundred dollars? Or should I even let them know?

GENEROUS HOST IN TEXAS

DEAR HOST: If I thought a lecture to these boors would

be effective, I would tell you to go ahead and do what you have in mind. However, a more effective and less confrontational way to save yourself a future headache would be to simply omit them from your guest list.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: My sister-in-law is a lovely woman—generous, with a heart of gold. Her husband, my husband's brother, is a kind and gentle man who works hard to provide for his family. They do much for their community and seemingly have every moment of the day occupied with something.

But whenever I'm with my SIL, she never fails to whine about where her husband falls short. Sometimes, she does it in front of him. It's uncomfortable because I don't want him to think I agree with her. Almost always the problems are minuscule. Example: The house is never clean enough, or he's not doing X-Y-Z to help her. (To me, it looks like he does plenty.) She says she's always doing "everything herself."

I'm not one for confrontation and don't want to cause trouble in our relationship because I do enjoy her a lot, and I'm afraid of the repercussions of "going there." But enough is enough. It makes me dread one-on-one conversations or not want to interact because it is draining. How do I handle this?

ZERO TOLERANCE

DEAR ABBY

By Abigail Van Buren
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



DEAR ZERO TOLERANCE: Ask your sister-in-law to please stop complaining, because when she does it makes you uncomfortable. After that, when she starts again, change the subject to something else — cooking, gardening, even politics or religion if you think it will distract her. Good luck.

■ ■ ■

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable — and most frequently requested — poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby — Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

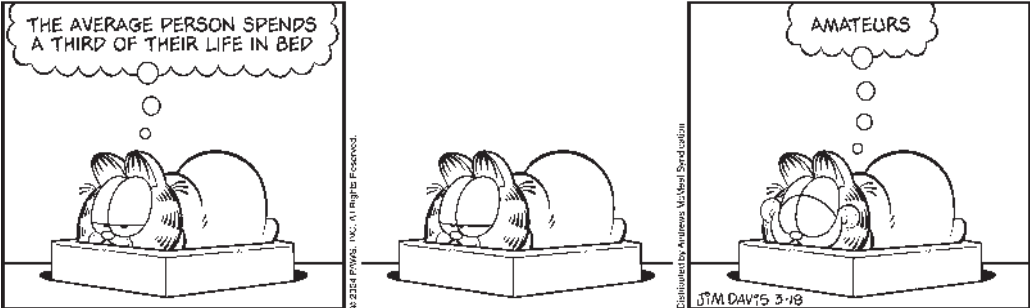
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



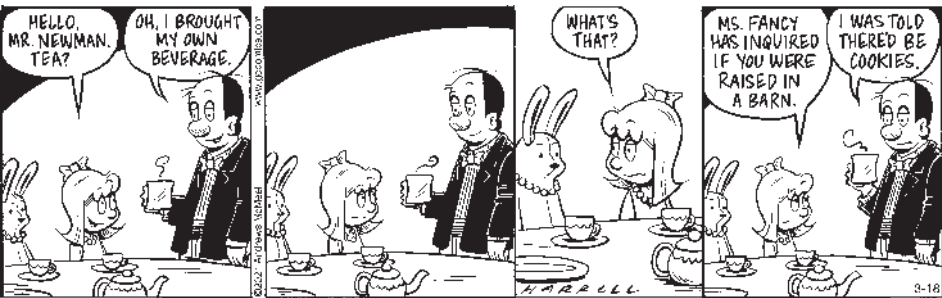
Garfield®

By Jim Davis



Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Met melody
5 Trail the pack
8 Ernie's pal
12 Proboscis
13 Dhabi
14 Geo-metric calculation
15 Old apple spray
16 Mis-leading
18 Dismal
20 Absurd comedies
21 Lettuce type
23 Science room
24 Erasure
28 Go by
31 St. crosser
32 Lake denizen
34 Snooze
35 Yoga class pads
37 Culinary treat

DOWN

39 NASCAR sponsor
41 Nero's
42 Seem
45 Shake-speare
49 The First State
51 Scurry
52 Bargain
53 Lustrous black
54 TV trophy
55 "The — the limit!"
56 Condo coolers
57 Authentic

3 Baker's aid
3 Golfer Aoki
4 Bacteriologist's study
5 Small beetle
6 Prez on a penny
7 Chasm
8 Unjust
9 "Munich" actor
10 Painter Magritte
11 Labels
17 "Friendly skies" co.

19 Catcher's aid
22 Greeted a bully
24 Weir
25 Longoria of TV
26 "Game on!"
27 In math class, they're empty
29 Pouch
30 CIA operative
33 DVR brand
36 Takes the wrong way?
38 Ember
40 Furry foot
42 Totals
43 Quick look
44 Prince of India
46 Christen
47 Witty Bombeck
48 Texter's sign-off
50 VCR button

Solution time: 21 mins.

Last Friday's Answer

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12				13				14		
15				16				17		
18				19				20		
			21			22		23		
24	25	26				27		28	29	30
31				32			33		34	
35				36		37		38		
			39		40		41			
42	43				44		45		46	47
48						50			51	
52					53				54	
55					56				57	

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Lily Collins, 35; Adam Levine, 45; Queen Latifah, 54; Vanessa Williams, 61.

Happy Birthday: Play to win. Be passionate and opportunity-driven. Don't hesitate; leap forward enthusiastically. Use your emotions as a barometer to make decisions that further your agenda. Relationships will require special attention and thought. Honesty regarding your feelings and intentions will keep you out of trouble and heading in the right direction. Use your energy wisely. Concentrate on what you can accomplish, not fighting losing battles. Your numbers are 4, 15, 23, 28, 32, 37, 43.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Overreacting will adversely affect a domestic or relationship situation. Do your best to prevent starting something you can't finish. Positive change and an optimistic attitude will help counter a sensitive situation. Choose patience. ☼☼

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Reach out; your connections will offer greater security and encourage you to change your personal life and how you choose to live. Gather information to ensure you go through the proper channels before you head down a different path. ☼☼☼

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Take nothing for granted, and verify information before you proceed. Confusion will arise if your emotions filter into money matters or joint ventures. Take time to observe, and consider what you need to change. It's OK to coast until you feel confident. ☼☼☼

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Consider what you want. Reach out to someone you trust to offer something you may have overlooked. Remove yourself from situations that

are risky. Take time for yourself to explore something you want to pursue. ☼☼☼

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Keep your eye on what's happening around you. A contractual change can jeopardize your financial future. Leave enough wiggle room to cover any hidden costs or to give yourself an outlet you can afford. Rely on experience, experts and making intelligent decisions. ☼☼☼

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Take the initiative to update information and prepare for changes you want to pursue. Reach out to someone who can offer insight or who may wish to share the path you decide to take. Don't push forward before addressing sensitive issues. Romance is favored. ☼☼☼☼

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Check your emotions before you blurt out something you'll regret. Refrain from buying into an unfamiliar investment or someone else's hunch. Joint ventures will turn out differently than planned. Focus on hard work, doing a good job and earning your keep. Concentrate on stability and home improvements. ☼☼

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Pursue a learning expedition, and you'll discover something that changes how you live and what you pursue. You are overdue for a change of pace and an update, so fasten your seat belt and prepare to zoom forward. Embrace the future with open arms and heartfelt desire. ☼☼☼☼

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Size up your financial situation and choose a budget to help you reach your destination. An intelligent spending plan requires control and emotional management to avoid temptation and im-

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY



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pulse buying. Sell off items you no longer need and be practical regarding entertainment costs. ☼☼☼

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Don't let someone play games with you. Trust your instincts and set boundaries that ensure positive results. Stick close to home, and adjust your lifestyle to fit your budget. Lower your overhead. ☼☼☼

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Update your skills, learn something new, follow trends and prepare to up your game. A different approach to something you enjoy can become additional income and a healthy pastime. A lifestyle change will lead to opportunities. ☼☼☼

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Get started and continue until you are happy with the results. Push for what's important to you, and refuse to let anyone use emotional manipulation to alter your course. Discipline and hard work will pay off. ☼☼☼☼

Birthday Baby: You are creative, sensitive and thoughtful. You are spontaneous and upbeat.

☼: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ☼☼: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ☼☼☼: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ☼☼☼☼: Aim high; start new projects. ☼☼☼☼☼: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku By Dave Green

6	4		3		1	2				
	9				2	4	6	7		
	5	1	7	6	8	9	3			
	1	5	4	3				2	9	
4	2		9						5	
	7				2				6	
7		9	1							2
	8	2	6							
		4				8				

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Last Friday's Answer

1	2	7	6	9	5	4	8	3
5	6	9	8	4	3	7	2	1
4	3	8	1	2	7	9	6	5
9	8	1	4	6	2	3	5	7
7	4	3	9	5	8	6	1	2
6	5	2	7	3	1	8	4	9
2	9	5	3	8	6	1	7	4
8	7	4	5	1	9	2	3	6
3	1	6	2	7	4	5	9	8

Difficulty: ★ 3/18
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WONDERWORD By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

SEQUINS MAKE YOU SHINE Solution: 7 letters

P O L I S H E D E L I T X E T
A E Y E C A T C H I N G S T I
T M A T E R I A L F A H N L U
T U U R A I N B O W O A I Y S
E T S S L (K) (L) (S) E G G S S P
R S H M I S I P S E H S L Y M
N O S O K C A H L T O I D R O J
N C I D E R I E K L A O R U
W T L E K M U A G N I W E S E
O I V L M Q R O N R I N S S W
G F E E I O L E S R U P S E E
L T R T S D R A D I A N T C L
L U U E U L G N I D D E W C S
A O R E T T I L G A B D N A H
B L O U S E M B R O I D E R Y

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Accessory, Ball Gown, Blouse, Boutique, Costume, Dress, Elegant, Embroidery, Eye-catching, Glitter, Glossy, Glue, Gold, Handbag, Jewels, Jumpsuit, Light, Like, Material, Model, Musician, Nails, Outfit, Pattern, Pearls, Pink, Polished, Purse, Radiant, Rainbow, Rose, Runway, Sewing, Shimmer, Shoes, Silk, Silver, Sparkle, Textile, Wedding
Last Friday's Answer: Influence
To purchase WONDERWORD books, visit www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480. (In Canada, call 1-855-232-2367)

STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

Warriors defeat Lakers 128-121 despite 40 points from James



LOS ANGELES (AP)—Stephen Curry scored 31 points in his return to Golden State's lineup, Klay Thompson added 26 off the bench and the Warriors beat the Los Angeles Lakers 128-121 on Saturday night in a pivotal Western Conference matchup.

LeBron James had 40 points, nine assists and eight rebounds for the Lakers, who had to play without Anthony Davis for the final three quarters after he suffered an eye injury.

The Warriors inched ahead of the Lakers by a percentage point into ninth place in the West after winning a game that dragged to the finish because of a pair of replay reviews—one that overturned an apparent 3-pointer by James—then a malfunctioning clock.

Davis got poked in the left eye by Golden State's Trayce Jackson-Davis while driving to the basket for a layup with 2:47 remaining in the first quarter. Davis kept playing for the next few minutes, but his eye was swollen shut as he went to the locker room.

The Lakers described the injury as an eye contusion.

Golden State took advantage of Davis' injury as it dominated inside and regularly drove into the paint. The Warriors out-rebounded the Lakers by six and had a 62-54 advantage in points in the paint.

Jonathan Kuminga added 23 points for the Warriors and Draymond Green had six points, 12 rebounds and 13 assists after he missed the last game due to back soreness.

D'Angelo Russell added 23 points and 13 assists for the Lakers, who have dropped their last two.

Curry, who turned 36 on Thursday, missed three games due to a sprained right ankle. He missed his first three shots before getting a rebound of his own miss and putting in a layup with 7:41 remaining in the first half. The two-time MVP was 12 of 24 from the field along with six rebounds and five assists in 31 minutes.

He had six points during a 10-2 third-quarter run that gave the Warriors a 91-79 lead. Neither team had more than a seven-point lead until that point.

Thompson had 21 points in the first half as the Warriors held a 67-66 lead at halftime. It was the second time this season Thompson has scored at least 20 in the first half.

James, who was 6 of 16 from the field in Wednesday night's loss at Sacramento, was 15 of 23 against the Warriors. He hit his first six shots, including three 3-pointers.

A 3-pointer by Thompson with 7:41 remaining in the fourth quarter gave the Warriors



Golden State Warriors guard Stephen Curry (30) shoots during the first half of an NBA basketball game against the Los Angeles Lakers in Los Angeles, Saturday, March 16, 2024.

a 113-101 advantage, before the Lakers started to slowly work their way back.

James appeared to hit a 3-pointer with 2:07 remaining to get the Lakers within four, but during a stoppage in play 17 seconds later, the replay center determined James' foot was out of bounds and took the basket away.

After the replay reversal and a challenge on another out of bounds play, the shot clock then malfunctioned with 1:35 remaining.

The reversal ended any momentum for the Lakers. The Warriors put the game away when Curry stole the ball from James and passed it to Kuminga for a breakaway dunk to make it 126-117.

ROCKETS 117, CAVALIERS 103

HOUSTON (AP)—Jalen Green had 26 points and 11 rebounds, and Houston beat Cleveland for their fifth straight victory.

Jabari Smith Jr. added 20 points, Amen Thompson had 18 and Fred VanVleet finished with 13 points and 16 assists for the Rockets, who made 15 3-pointers and outscored Cleveland 56-46 in the paint.

Green added four assists while hitting 4 of 9 from 3.

Houston led 70-54 at halftime and entered the fourth quarter with a 25-point lead.

The Rockets have won seven of their last eight, pulling within three games of the Golden State Warriors for the final Western Conference play-in spot.

Caris LeVert scored 21 points for Cleveland. Georges Niang had 14 and Donovan Mitchell added 13.

76ERS 109, HORNETS 98

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—

Tyrese Maxey shook off a bloody nose caused by Brandon Miller's flagrant foul to score 30 points, Kelly Oubre Jr. chipped in 22 and Philadelphia withstood a fourth-quarter charge to beat Charlotte.

Buddy Hield had 14 points and Paul Reed added 11 for the 76ers, who have struggled with an 8-13 record since Joel Embiid's meniscus injury at the end of January to fall into eighth place in the Eastern Conference, putting them in danger of having to take part in the play-in tournament.

Tre Mann had 21 points and Miles Bridges added 14 for Charlotte, which has lost six straight to Philadelphia and nine of its last 12 overall.

Charlotte had trailed for most of the night but took an 89-88 lead after two free throws by Bridges capped an 18-9 run with about five minutes remaining. After that point, Maxey and Oubre took control on the offensive end, driving to the basket and through the Hornets' defence.

THUNDER 118, GRIZZLIES 112

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP)—Chet Holmgren had 22 points and 11 rebounds, Jalen Williams added 23 points and six assists and Oklahoma City held off Memphis to claim a share of first place in the Western Conference.

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander added 20 points and Josh Giddey finished with 13. Oklahoma City's fifth win in six games pulled the Thunder even with idle Denver atop the West at 47-20.

Desmond Bane, playing in his first game since Jan. 12 due to injury, led the Grizzlies with 22 points and seven assists. Jaren Jackson Jr. and GG Jackson finished with 19

points apiece for Memphis, which lost its second straight and fourth in five games.

After a closely contested game early on, the Thunder were able to create a bit of a buffer in the third, stretching the lead to 14 points while shooting 53 per cent at that point for the game. They went on a 19-5 run in the final minutes of the frame.

Memphis fought back to within one possession early in the fourth, but another Oklahoma City run, fueled by a couple of Holmgren baskets inside, stretched the Thunder lead to double digits.

PELICANS 126, TRAIL BLAZERS 107

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—CJ McCollum scored 30 points, Zion Williamson had 26 points and 10 rebounds, and New Orleans defeated Portland for their sixth victory in seven games.

Brandon Ingram scored 22 points and blocked four shots, and Trey Murphy III added 20 points for the Pelicans, who shot 53.6 per cent (52 of 97) and broke open a competitive game in the fourth quarter. McCollum made six of the Pelicans' 13 3-pointers, and Murphy hit four.

The victory pulled the Pelicans within 1 1/2 games of the idle Los Angeles Clippers for fourth place in the Western Conference.

Portland guard Dalano Banton scored 28 points, his third time scoring 25 or more points in his last six games, including a career-high 30 points on March 8 against Houston. Anfernee Simmons scored 25 and Deandre Ayton had 20 points for the Blazers, who shot 50 per cent (42 of 84).

PACERS 121, NETS 100

INDIANAPOLIS (AP)—Pascal Siakam had 28 points and 11 rebounds, Aaron Nesmith scored 16 points and Indiana beat Brooklyn.

All-Star Tyrese Haliburton finished with 14 points and seven rebounds for the Pacers, overcoming a 6-for-18 shooting night, and his backup T.J. McConnell finished with 13 points. McConnell has scored in double figures 10 times in his past 17 games.

Cam Thomas had 22 points and eight rebounds for the Nets, who were outscored 82-42 in the paint in the teams' first meeting of the season. Brooklyn shot 43 per cent from the field, committed 21 turnovers and fell to 1-4 on its six-game road trip.

Indiana trailed 30-25 at the end of the first quarter and led just 59-57 at halftime before blowing the game open in the second half, leading by 27 in the fourth quarter. The victory was the Pacers' seventh of the season by a margin of at least 20 points.

Cam Johnson scored 14 points for the Nets, Dennis Schroder had 13 points and five assists, and Dorian Finney-Smith finished with 12 points.

BULLS 127, WIZARDS 98

CHICAGO (AP)—Ayo Dosunmu scored a career-high 34 points, Nikola Vucevic added 29 points and 13 rebounds, and Chicago pounded Washington.

The Bulls made it look easy against the team with the NBA's worst record with Dosunmu and Vucevic setting the tone. They led by 22 at halftime and never were threatened after the break.

Dosunmu, whose previous high was 29 points in a win at

Atlanta last month, made four three-pointers. He matched a season-best with nine assists.

Alex Caruso scored 16. DeMar DeRozan added 13 points—despite taking just seven shots—and six assists.

The Wizards fell to 4-20 under interim coach Brian Keefe with their third straight loss and 19th in 21 games.

Corey Kispert led Washington with 16 points, and Bilal Coulibaly scored 15.

TIMBERWOLVES 119, JAZZ 100

SALT LAKE CITY (AP)—Anthony Edwards scored 31 points despite a twisted ankle, Mike Conley added a season-high 25 points in his return to Utah and the Minnesota Timberwolves topped the struggling Jazz 119-100 on Saturday night.

Edwards stepped on Taylor Hendricks' foot while driving and turned his right ankle just before halftime. He got up limping and went straight to the locker room.

Edwards jumped rope during the break and started the second half, but seemed a bit slower and less explosive.

Still, he made four 3-pointers, a layup and a circus three-point play in the final two quarters to help Minnesota keep Utah at bay.

The game marked the first time Conley played in Utah since being traded in February 2023 after four seasons with the Jazz and was highest scoring output with Minnesota.

Collin Sexton scored 22 points and Keyonte George added 18 for the Jazz, who have lost four of five. They host Minnesota on Monday.

KNICKS 98, KINGS 91

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP)—Jalen Brunson scored 42 points, becoming the fourth player in franchise history with 40 or more in consecutive games, and the New York Knicks beat the Sacramento Kings 98-91 on Saturday night.

Brunson had 45 points in Thursday's win at Portland, his seventh 40-point game of the season. He's the first Knicks player to reach that total in back-to-back games since Carmelo Anthony on Feb. 19 and 21, 2014.

Hall of Famers Bernard King and Patrick Ewing are the other Knicks to do it.

Donte DiVincenzo scored 15 points and Josh Hart had nine points and 12 rebounds. Isaiah Hartenstein was a force on the defensive end, blocking five shots and grabbing 14 rebounds, along with seven points.

Domantas Sabonis led the Kings with 21 points and 14 rebounds for his 49th consecutive double-double.

Ohtani, wife arrive in S. Korea for Dodgers-Padres MLB opener

By HYUNG-JIN KIM
ASSOCIATED PRESS

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—Shohei Ohtani and his wife arrived in South Korea with his Los Angeles Dodgers teammates on Friday ahead of their season-opening games with the San Diego Padres next week.

Ohtani, wearing a black training suit and a cap backwards, was the first Dodgers player who showed up at the arrival gate of Incheon international airport, west of Seoul. His wife, Mamiko Tanaka, walked several steps behind him.

As a crowd of fans, many wearing Dodgers jerseys, shouted his name and cheering slogans, Ohtani briefly waved his hand and Tanaka smiled, but neither said anything before they took a limousine bus. Fans held placards that read like "GOATANI (Greatest Of



AP
Los Angeles Dodgers' Shohei Ohtani addresses the media about his surprise marriage announcement, Thursday, Feb. 29, 2024, during spring training baseball workouts at Camelback Ranch in Phoenix.

All Time is Ohtani) GO" and "Baseball genius Ohtani."

Before departing for South

Korea, Ohtani, a two-way Japanese phenomenon, revealed the identity of his wife by posting a

photo of him and Tanaka, an ex-professional basketball player, on his Instagram account. Japa-

nese media had already speculated that Ohtani's wife was likely Tanaka.

Tanaka, 27, played for the Fujitsu Red Wave in the Women's Japan Basketball League from 2019-23.

In late February, Ohtani, 29, said in his Instagram post that he was married to "a normal Japanese woman" that he had known for three to four years. But he didn't say exactly who his wife was.

In Ohtani's Instagram post, he was photographed with Tanaka in front of an airplane alongside his teammate Yoshinobu Yamamoto. The Dodgers posted a photo of the Ohtani-Tanaka couple on the team's X (formerly Twitter)

account next to one of Mookie Betts and his wife.

The upcoming Dodgers-Padres games will be Ohtani's debut with the Dodgers. In December, Ohtani, who was formerly with the Los Angeles Angels, signed a record \$700 million, 10-year contract to join the Dodgers.

Ohtani underwent surgery on his right elbow last September and will not pitch this season. He will be used as a designated hitter and there is a possibility he could play in the field.

Social media in Japan and South Korea are abuzz with messages talking about Ohtani and his wife.

"So impressed to see how Ohtani opened up about his new bride, Mamiko Tanaka," one X user said in Japanese.

"Ohtani's wife is really beautiful. They are both made for each other," one X user said in Korean. Another Korean message said that "their future kid will be a super athlete."

The Padres arrived earlier Friday. The two-game series in Seoul's Gocheok Sky Dome on March 20-21 will be the first Major League Baseball regular-season games in South Korea.

Meanwhile, airport police said they detained a South Korean man who allegedly hurled an egg near Dodgers manager Dave Roberts at the airport. Police said they were trying to determine the motive for his action, but his family told investigators the man in his mid-20s has a history of mental illness.

S. Korea, Mexico, Britain, Alabama among MLB's scheduled stops in 2024

CHICAGO (AP)—Beginning with its ninth international opener, Major League Baseball is traveling all over the world in 2024.

Here are some dates to remember for the upcoming season:

SEOUL SERIES-WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20

Los Angeles Dodgers at San Diego Padres: Shohei Ohtani makes his Dodgers debut in Seoul, South Korea, against Manny Machado and the Padres. Ohtani signed a record \$700 million, 10-year deal with LA in free agency. The two-way star is focusing on DH duties this season while he recovers from a right elbow injury. San Diego traded Juan Soto to the New York Yankees in December, but the Padres still have Machado and Xander Bogaerts in their dangerous lineup.

OPENING DAY-THURSDAY, MARCH 28

Chicago Cubs at Texas Rangers: The Rangers get another opportunity to celebrate the franchise's first World Series championship before they begin their title defense against Cody Bellinger and the Chicago Cubs on opening day. Corey Seager is back for Texas after playing a starring role in October, winning the World Series MVP award for the second time. The Cubs should be in the mix for the NL Central title after they brought back the sweet-swinging Bellinger on an \$80 million, three-year contract.

MEXICO CITY SERIES-SATURDAY, APRIL 27

Houston Astros at Colorado Rockies: Big league baseball returns to Estadio Alfredo Harp Helú in Mexico City after the Padres swept a two-game set against the Giants in the Mexi-

can capital last year. This time, it's Jose Altuve and the Astros taking on Kris Bryant and the Rockies. Houston is looking for another October run after signing closer Josh Hader to a \$95 million, five-year contract in free agency. A healthy season for Bryant, who appeared in just 122 games over the previous two years, could provide a big lift for Colorado.

CRAIG COUNSELL'S RETURN-MONDAY, MAY 27

Chicago Cubs at Milwaukee Brewers: Craig Counsell manages his first game in Milwaukee since he was hired by Chicago in November in a surprise move. The 53-year-old Counsell grew up in Milwaukee and finished his playing career with the Brewers before becoming the team's winningest manager, going 707-625 in nine seasons. Counsell's new job adds another element to the rivalry between the NL Central teams, separated by about 90 miles.

WORLD SERIES REMATCH-TUESDAY, MAY 28

Arizona Diamondbacks at Texas Rangers: It's a rematch of the 2023 World Series, won by Texas in five games. Arizona won't be sneaking up on anyone this time around, not after Corbin Carroll, Ketel Marte and company went on a memorable October run. The Diamondbacks strengthened their rotation in December, finalizing an \$80 million, four-year deal with Eduardo Rodriguez. The Rangers should have a strong lineup once again, and pitchers Max Scherzer and Jacob deGrom are expected back at some point this summer.

LONDON SERIES-SATURDAY, JUNE 8

Philadelphia Phillies at New York Mets: Bryce Harper and the Phillies face Pete Alonso and the Mets in the opener of a two-game series at London Stadium in the British capital. Harper is taking over as Philadelphia's full-time first baseman after beginning his big league career as an outfielder. The two-time NL MVP hit .293 with 21 homers last year in his fifth season with the Phillies. Alonso, who blasted 46 homers in 2023, is eligible for free agency after this season.

NEGRO LEAGUES TRIBUTE GAME-THURSDAY, JUNE 20

San Francisco Giants at St. Louis Cardinals: The Giants play the Cardinals in a Negro Leagues tribute game at Rickwood Field in Birmingham, Alabama. The 10,800-seat stadium, opened in 1910, is the oldest professional ballpark in the U.S. and a National Historic Site. The stadium was home to the Birmingham Black Barons from 1924-60. The game will honor Hall of Famer Willie Mays, an Alabama native.

ALL-STAR GAME-TUESDAY, JULY 16

Globe Life Field—the majors' newest ballpark and the home of the Rangers—hosts the 94th edition of the All-Star Game. Texas also hosted the Midsummer Classic when the National League posted a 3-2 victory in 1995 at The Ballpark in Arlington. Globe Life Field opened in 2020, hosting a neutral-site World Series that same year during the COVID-19 pandemic.

NL EAST SHOWDOWN-TUESDAY, AUG. 20

Philadelphia Phillies at Atlanta Braves: Ronald Acuña

Jr. and Atlanta open a six-game homestand with the first of three games against Kyle Schwarber and Philadelphia. Acuña is the reigning NL MVP after powering the Braves to their sixth consecutive NL East title, a full 14 games ahead of the second-place Phillies. But Philadelphia eliminated Atlanta in four games in their NL Division Series. The offseason acquisition of left-hander Chris Sale could help the Braves return to the World Series for the first time since they won it all in 2021.

FREEWAY SERIES-WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 4

Los Angeles Dodgers at Los Angeles Angels: Dodgers left-hander Clayton Kershaw is just 56 strikeouts shy of 3,000 for his career. The three-time Cy Young Award winner is expected to return this summer after he had shoulder surgery in November, so his pursuit of the milestone could come down to the final days of the season. Mike Trout and the Angels are moving on after Ohtani departed in free agency.

AL EAST ON THE LINE?-THURSDAY, SEPT. 26

Baltimore Orioles at New York Yankees: Adley Rutschman and Baltimore play the finale of their 13-game season series against Aaron Judge and New York. The Orioles went 7-6 against the Yankees last year on their way to the AL East title. They bolstered their chance for a repeat performance when they acquired right-hander Corbin Burnes in a trade with Milwaukee on Feb. 1. Judge and the Yankees are looking to rebound after they went 82-80 last season.

Ohtani says Seoul MLB games will be 'great memories' for him and wife

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—Los Angeles Dodgers star Shohei Ohtani says the upcoming Major League Baseball season opener against the San Diego Padres in Seoul will provide "great memories" for him and his wife, but he'll attempt to focus on baseball.

Ohtani spoke to journalists with Dodgers teammates at a packed press conference on Saturday, a day after he arrived here with his wife Mamiko Tanaka.

Ohtani said it was the first time for his wife "to come with me to a game like this."

"So I think it's going to be really great memories for both of us. But like I said earlier, I have one job to focus on. It's baseball," Ohtani said via an interpreter.

In late February, Ohtani, 29, said on Instagram that he was married to "a normal Japanese woman" he had known for three to four years. But he hadn't said who she was until another Instagram post with a photo of him and Tanaka on Thursday.

Tanaka, 27, is a former professional basketball player who

played for the Fujitsu Red Wave in the Women's Japan Basketball League from 2019-23.

The Dodgers-Padres games on March 20-21 will be Ohtani's debut with the Dodgers, and they will be the first MLB regular season games in Seoul.

In December, Ohtani signed a record \$700 million, 10-year contract to join the Dodgers. He underwent surgery on his right elbow last September and will not pitch this season. He will be used as a designated hitter and there is a possibility he could play in the field.

Ohtani says he is aware of the intense international media focus on the games in Seoul.

"I appreciate all the attention. Obviously, attention is always great, being a baseball player and being able to play with these great guys next to me. I'm really excited," Ohtani said, referring to his two teammates speaking at the news conference, Mookie Betts and Freddie Freeman.

"I'm really used to the attention, but I just try to focus on what's in front of me, whatever it is."

Bank of Guam donates \$10K to NMC Foundation



As part of its long-standing commitment to higher education in the CNMI, Bank of Guam recently donated \$10,000 to the Northern Marianas College Foundation for the upcoming Golf Open on March 23 and 24, 2024.

"Education and teamwork drive success, both on the green and in our communities. NMC's Golf Open embodies these values, and we're proud to partner with them to chip in for scholarships and academic excellence, ensuring every CNMI student has the chance to swing for their dreams," said Bank of Guam vice president Marcie Tomokane.

NMC's tournament will be a two-day event and the tournament fee for the 2024 golf open is \$250.

"On behalf of NMC's Foun-



Bank of Guam donated \$10,000 to the Northern Marianas College Foundation, in support of its upcoming NM Golf Open on March 23 and 24, 2024. In photo with NMC president Dr. Galvin DeLeon Guerrero are BOG executive vice president/chief operating officer Maria Eugenia H. Leon Guerrero, BOG senior vice president/chief Retail & Card Services manager Janice Chargualaf, BOG senior vice president/chief experience officer Lesley-Ann Leon Guerrero, BOG's Kal Rengil, BOG vice president/CNMI Regional manager Marcie M. Tomokane, NMC vice president for Administration and Advancement Frankie Eliptico, NMC dean of Student Support Services Charlotte Cepeda, NMC director of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness Vilma Reyes, and NMC Human Resources director Polly Masga.

dation and every student who will benefit, I express our deepest gratitude to Bank of Guam," said Ben Babauta, chairperson of the NMC Foundation. "We're thrilled to have their support in shaping bright futures through education."

The tournament, which is also the signature event of the NMC Foundation, aims to raise funds to build and equip modern, innovative campus facilities that will help expand the CNMI's workforce development efforts, stimulate economic growth, and provide access to quality education for the residents of the CNMI.

Like previous tournaments, this upcoming tournament will feature thousands of dollars in amazing prizes such as a 2024 Lexus RX350 from Atkins Kroll, a 2023 Honda Civic Type R from Joeten Motors, a \$10,000 shopping spree from Top Shelf Wine and Spirits, a

\$10,000 cash prize from Ambyth Shipping, a \$10,000 cash prize from Pacifica Insurance, and a \$3,000 cash prize from McDonald's of Saipan.

Interested companies and individuals who would like to help the college with its rebuilding efforts can donate educational tax credit, cash, or in-kind contributions by visiting www.marianas.edu/golf or by contacting Helen Camacho at helen.camacho@marianas.edu, Raynard Travilla at raynard.travilla@marianas.edu, or Miguel Dandan at miguel.dandan@marianas.edu.

Golfers who would like to register for the upcoming tournament can also visit www.marianas.edu/golf. Only online payments are accepted for this upcoming golf open.

For more updates, follow Northern Marianas College on Facebook and Instagram ([nmc.proa](https://www.facebook.com/nmc.proa)) or visit www.marianas.edu. (PR)

RUN

From page 20

The 57-year-old started running everyday on Dec. 28, 2020 and has logged countless miles since then. With reaching his "Gump Day," he said he had only originally wanted to run 30 straight days, then it became 90 days, then one year, then it became 1,000 days. Now, upon completion of "Gump Day," he wants to make it past the first tier of streak running, but he has no plans to stop.

Right now, Snyder is a Neophyte, someone who's run everyday between 1-5 years.

The next tier is Proficient (5-10 years), then Well Versed (15-20 years), Highly Skilled (20-25 years), The Dominators (25-30 years), The Masters (30-35 years), The Grand Masters (35-40 years), The Legends (40-45 years), The Coverts (45-50 years), and The Hills, (50+ years).

Snyder said that his favorite spot to run is the Marpi area, hence he commemorated his "Gump Day" there, and because it was the closest thing to Gump's final run in the movie. His other running spots, since he currently lives in Sadog Tasi, are either at the

Gov. Eloy Inos Peace Park, the American Memorial Park, or the Beach Road Pathway.

As for the CNMI's running community, Snyder said he's impressed with how it's developed over the years. "Ed [Dela Cruz Jr.] has been streak running forever; I started three years ago, but now we have a lot of people in the two-year mark, in the one-year mark, and a lot of people starting their streaks this year," said Snyder.

Snyder has actually been running with an infection on his left leg for about a week, and said streak running is tough, but that anyone can start a streak

by running just a mile a day. "You can keep the streak going with 10-15 minutes of your time, and just keep going. I was hoping to run a lot farther today, but not with my leg the way it is," he said.

On how he keeps pushing and running everyday despite the many obstacles, he said, "I mean now, it's kind of a habit. It's just part of my routine. I know I need to run my mile, and I'm going to go out and do my mile. At the very least, it's a mile. I like to go two plus miles, but on days where I'm busy with work or sick, a mile would do it."

SANTOS

From page 20

(13U), Gaus Rowada was first at 33:43; second went to Gabriel Walsh with a time of 34:15; and third was Joshua Yoo at 36:22.

In the female youth division, Spaeth was first with her 25:28 time, followed by Janaya Lee at 25:32, then Sireane DeLeon Guerrero with 25:46.

Santos said he overdid it in the last turn after he sprinted all out and all he could see was a stretch of road. He was actually far behind in the beginning but moved up at the halfway point, then started getting closer around the third kilometer, where he caught up to Veloria and Tang who led most of the way.

Toward the finish line, it was he and Tang side by side, so Santos said he knew he had to go faster. "I saw him and I just wanted to secure the win, so it turned out well," he said about the way too close finish.

The 16-year-old said he joined last year's run and as it is a community fun run, he tried to get as many colors thrown at him at each station in the course.

For Chavez, she said the race was great. "It's nice that the Triple J 5K is back because it brings everyone out. Honestly, it's just a fun way to get some

exercise in. I was leading the whole way, and I would just slow down at every water station because it's not a competitive race. This might be one of the races where I can just have fun. I join every year," she said.

The funds raised will benefit the Make-A-Wish Foundation and the Commonwealth Cancer Association.

Platinum sponsors were: TanHoldings, Tan Siu Lin Foundation, Hagu Real, and United Airlines; Gold sponsors were Island Image and Motion, *Saipan Tribune*, *Marianas Variety*, Mobil Oil Marianas, and Run Saipan; Silver sponsors were First Hawaiian Bank, Gold's Gym, Kensington Hotel Saipan, McDonald's Saipan, Elliot Systems, Micronesian Brokers, Bank of Guam, Foremost/Coca Cola; Bronze sponsors were Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan, Docomo Pacific, IT&E, Marpac, Wushin Corp.n, and Saipan Ice and Water Company; Race sponsors were Hyatt Regency Saipan, STAR Water, and WSTCO. A special thank you to National Park Service, Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services, Department of Public Safety, and Sound Hire.

Results of the rest of the divisions will be posted in the next issues of *Saipan Tribune*.

AGAPE

From page 20

and final set.

Daniel Yang's precise kills at the net and unpredictable game play rooted FMS to the ground as all they could do was watch the ball fly and land point after point for ACS in the final set.

FMS had a good momentum going in the first set after their recent win against Saipan International School in the semis a few minutes earlier, but ACS' Daniel Yang ensured they get the title this year after falling short last year.

It was a back-and-forth of points in the first set, 13-13, 14-14, 15-15, until the very end, which pushed the first game to extras. Whoever won by a margin of 2 points got the set, and Daniel Yang's back-to-back attacks, after perfect set ups at the net secured the close win, 22-20.

Third place went to last season's champion Saipan International School after they fell to FMS in the semis, 20-22, 19-21.

Head coach En Yang Pang said it felt great to win the

championship, since this was the first championship for ACS in any ball sport. Last season, they were the runner-up after they lost to SIS in the finals. He said this title validates his coaching because, "I feel like the boys were very receptive to the way I was coaching them. It can be a little harsh sometimes, but they did a really good job over the season," he said.

With their undefeated run this year, he said it was a very good season. "I'm just very happy that they were able to pull off all these wins and bring the championship to us," he said. As for their finals against FMS, he said that it was a very tough first set against them because FMS had momentum going after their win over SIS.

ACS, since they were in the winner's bracket, their last game was around 10am and they had to wait for the winner of the semis, so by the time they played in the finals, they weren't that warmed up.

After a really close and tough first set, however, Pang said that by the second set, "they were warmed up and they were able to get themselves into the



LEIGH GASES

Agape Christian School's main hitter Daniel Yang goes for a kill against Francisco M. Sablan Middle School defenders during their championship game in the NMIVA-PSS Interscholastic Boys Middle School Volleyball League 2023-2024 last Saturday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

mentality of playing and winning. They were able to showcase the skill that they had, and their teamwork and ability."

ACS' starters of Daniel Yang, Joseph Yang, Raffy Cai, Cheng, Li, and Escarlan, are promoting to high school, so their bench will move up and their whole team will restart next season.

Pang thanked NMIVA, PSS Athletics Program, everyone that was involved in the league, and the schools and coaches


who participated.

He then said that volleyball in the CNMI is going places. "These are middle school students. Imagine what they'll be like in high school. I'm excited to see the full potential of all the students on the island as a whole. Maybe in the near future, we could see Saipan becoming a powerhouse in volleyball in the Oceania region. That's something I'm hoping to see, and it starts from here with the grassroots."



LEIGH GASES

Andrei Kaithlyn Chavez is drenched in color as she runs into first place overall in the women's division of the 2024 Triple J 5K Bubble Color Run that spanned the Micro Beach parking lot behind Hyatt Regency Saipan, to Puerto Rico, and back to the finish line at the Hyatt Regency Saipan Club Elan parking lot last Saturday morning.



Warriors defeat Lakers 128-121 despite 40 points from James.

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Bank of Guam donates \$10K to NMC Foundation.

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LEIGH GASES

Last Thursday at Marpi with friends and family behind him, Dr. Ron Snyder runs into his “Gump Day” running streak of 1,170 days in a row, or the sum of three years, two months, 14 days, and 16 hours—just like Forrest Gump did in the 1994 movie. Snyder actually ran his 1,172nd day that day because it’s a leap year and he counted the 16 hours as a day.

By **LEIGH GASES**
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REPORTER

“Run, Doc Run!” and run he did, as Saipan International School headmaster Dr. Ron Snyder, a streak runner, reached the “Gump Day” milestone of running 1,170 days in a row, or the sum of three years, two months, 14 days, and 16 hours—just like Forrest Gump did in the 1994 movie.

While Gump ran everyday across the United States almost five times before being tired and deciding to return home again, Snyder ran a mile or more a day wherever he was at that time—despite the pandemic, traveling, and sickness.

On his “Gump Day,” which was actually 1,172 days last Thursday because it’s a leap year and he counted the 16 hours as another day, Snyder ran his mandatory mile from

the old Marianas Resort in Marpi with his best friend, pet dog Gilligan, friends, and family by his side.

Snyder, sans Forrest Gump costume because it didn’t arrive on time, tried to replicate Gump’s last run with a group of people and mountains in the background, and with Saipan’s Suicide Cliff in the background, it was the perfect picturesque spot for his “Gump Day” run.

See **RUN** on Page 19



Agape storms the court to v-ball champs

By **LEIGH GASES**
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REPORTER



Agape Christian School Torchbearers finally secured the elusive championship trophy after they struck down Francisco M. Sablan Middle School Napu Riders in the finals of the NMIVA-PSS Interscholastic Boys Middle School Volleyball League 2023-2024.

In a lively Marianas High School Gymnasium last Saturday, the Torchbearers struggled but fought out of a tough first inning, 22-20, then dominated the second set, 21-7, to clinch the championship.

ACS’ starters and eighth graders Daniel Yang, Raffy Cai, Danny Cheng, Reyviel Escarlan, Joseph Yang, and

Benny Li led the Torchbearers, along with Daniel Huang, Scott Shi, Benjamin Cai, and Andy Chen, to their school’s first championship ever in any

ball sports competitions.

While the Napu Riders’ Michael Elayda, Kyle Tabenas, Xiaolin Guo, Jairoh Guilas, Jairus Pangilinan, Sean Mo-

rilla, Frank Lumanlan, Keith Agulto, De’anthony Aldan, and Dezmon Camacho gave the Torchbearers a run for their money in the first set, ACS showed no mercy in the second

See **AGAPE** on Page 19



LEIGH GASES

Agape Christian School’s middle school boys volleyball team poses with their championship trophies and medals, along with their head coach En Yang Pang, second from right, and ACS pastor Kok H. Pang, far left, during the awards ceremony of the NMIVA-PSS Interscholastic Boys Middle School Volleyball League 2023-2024 last Saturday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

Santos, Chavez top Triple J 5K Bubble Color Run

By **LEIGH GASES**
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REPORTER

Out of the over 1,300 participants of the 2024 Triple J 5K Bubble Color Run on a very colorful Saturday morning, Mount Carmel School’s Victor Nash Santos won by a literal neck in a neck-and-neck race for first place overall.

The course started at the Micro Beach parking lot behind Hyatt Regency Saipan, headed up north to Puerto Rico, then to the finish at the Hyatt Regency Saipan Club Elan parking lot.

In a close race to the finish, Santos leaned forward just enough to beat out Marianas High School’s Pony Tang with a time of 18:26.26, while Tang was right at his heels

with a time of 18:26.76. Third place went to Sildrey Veloria who clocked in at 19:21.

Saipan International School’s Andrei Kaithlyn Chavez was the first overall female with a time of 22:36. She was followed by Julie Ruszala at 25:07, and third was Lovel Spaeth at 25:28.

The male junior division (14-19 years old) Top 3 were also first place Santos and second place Tang, while third place was Yile Wang at 19:33.

The female Junior division Top 3 was also Andre Kaithlyn Chavez, then Catherine Paz at 27:46; and tied at third place were Julie Chavez and Megan Elayda at 32:45 each.

In the male youth division See **SANTOS** on Page 19



LEIGH GASES

Victor Nash Santos leans forward to beat out Pony Tang for first place overall in the 2024 Triple J 5K Bubble Color Run that spanned the Micro Beach parking lot behind Hyatt Regency Saipan, to Puerto Rico, and back to the finish line at the Hyatt Regency Saipan Club Elan parking lot last Saturday morning.